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ABSTRACT

This booklet on the educational techniques of role playing describes a method designed to help children become decision-makers by providing a life-related way to help them learn to solve problems between people. Part 1 describes the role-playing method in which children act out the ending of an unfinished "problem story" which stops with a dilemma usually demanding a choice between a personal interest and a social value. Part 2 on how to guide a role-playing session focuses on each step in the process: warming up, selection of participants, preparing the audience, role playing, discussing and evaluating, replaying the revised roles, sharing experience and generalizing. Part 3 discusses the planning of a curriculum to provide a program in intergroup education. Part 4, "A Strategy for Intergroup Education," includes six problem stories with discussion of their use in individual group acceptance, intergroup relations, and sensitivity training. Part 5 on involvement contains a problem story focusing on a "busybody or good Samaritan" dilemma. Part 6 describes special uses of role playing, e.g., how it can be used to relieve a disturbing classroom situation and to bring help to a handicapped child. Part 7 illustrates how children can write their own problem stories. Part 8 on role playing for younger children includes discussion of pantomime, dramatic play , and use of problem pictures as a stimulant for role playing. A 53-item bibliography is included. (JS)

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building INTELLIGENT CONCERN FOR OTHERS through ROLE-PLAYING

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Helping children to understand themselves and others, to develop social skills and attitudes, to think critically, and to be concerned with the welfare of others are basic in democratic education. The National Conference of Christians and Jews believes this pamphlet, on the educational techniques of role-playing, will be of practical help in achieving these objectives.

The authors are especially well qualified for the task they have accomplished. Dr. Fannie R. Shaftel is Associate Professor of Education, Stanford University. She has steadily contributed to the improvement of teaching. Mr. George Shaftel, who is a professional writer working in both fiction and nonfiction, shares his wife's keen interest in the teaching of children.

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THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

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Part I

ROLE-PLAYING

Children today live in a world of constant, sometimes revolutionary, change. Increasingly life confronts them with situations in which past solutions are not adequate. Accordingly, they have to become skilled problem-solvers, able to define a problem situation; they have to think of many, even new, ways to solve the problem, and be able then to test their ideas in action.

In urban life particularly, children are confronted with many choices. They need to learn to become decision-makers.

How do you choose?

When shall you be for yourself?

When are you responsible for others?

To help children become decision-makers, an educational technique called *role-playing* is useful. It provides a life-related way to help young children learn to solve problems between people.

The method of role-playing described here is a special one. The group role-plays a "problem-story." The teacher reads a story to the children. The story is unfinished. It stops with a dilemma. That is, the story problem is not simple but involves alternatives for solution. The dilemma usually demands a choice between a personal interest and a social value.

When the teacher stops reading the story, she looks up at the group of listening children and asks: "What do you think will happen now? What will the boy (or girl) do?"

Various children usually offer opinions. After brief discussion, the teacher asks volunteers to come forward and *act out* an ending to the story.

This enactment is followed by more discussion. Further alternatives may be proposed. Each is tried out in action.

The teacher's role is quite different from the conventional one of telling children what is right and punishing what is wrong. In role-playing, the teacher provides the problem situation, involves the children in discussion and enactment, then acts as a non-judgmental observer, facilitating exploration of the children's ideas. Each child's proposal, even an anti-social one, is accepted as worthy of examination. In this process, the teacher is a moderator of the pupils' interaction. She *trusts* them to discover – *in action* – the consequences of the different choices they make and to *draw their own conclusions* of what is a good or a poor solution to the human problem involved. The teaching techniques focus on a few key questions:

"What is happening here?"

"How do these people feel?"

"What will happen now?"

The observing class reacts in discussion to questions such as:

"Could this really happen this way?"

"How are the various people affected by this action?"

"Are we really solving the problem?"

In this process, the goal is not to settle upon *a* solution. Rather, it is to help children explore the many ways in which people may respond to the same situation. As each proposal is followed to its consequences, children become increasingly more sensitive to the consequences to themselves and to others of each decision. In such explorations, children gradually grow in their ability to *anticipate* consequences, in their *sensitivity* to feelings in self and in others, and in their skill in generating alternatives that offer reasonable solutions to human dilemmas.

The materials we use are stories that focus on typical life situations of children. We believe that we must begin the ethical education of children at levels most meaningful to them – that these experiences can become bridges to improved coping with the problems of society. In the role-playing of problem-stories, children are stimulated to choose between a personal interest and a social value, between loyalty and honesty, between winning honestly and losing honorably, between concern for a friend and protection of self, between fairness to another and giving in to group pressure.

This, we believe, is the beginning level of education for ethical behavior, for good citizenship, and for personal integrity and group responsibility.

A sample session

Here is an example of how a class responds to a problem-story. The story used was TRICK OR TREAT.* The time is Halloween. Pete wants to go trick-or-treating. Pete has promised his father that, this year, he will commit no mischief. But Pete's friend, Sandy, involves them in a trick in which some property (a house trailer) is damaged. Two younger boys are blamed for the damage. However, by saying nothing, Pete and Sandy can avoid all blame. They can let the younger boys take the punishment.

TEACHER READS THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE TO THE CLASS (the climax of the problem-story:)

Pete: Sandy, what are we going to do about Ronnie Hite?

Sandy: Nothing.

Pete: He may tell the police that a couple of older boys told him to tie the rope to the car.

Sandy: So what? Ronnie doesn't know who we are. We were wearing costumes and masks. He can't give us away.

Pete: But he'll be blamed for it all!

*Story from *Role-Playing for Social Values*, by Fannie R. Shaftel and George Shaftel, copyright 1967. Reprinted by permission of Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Sandy: Sure. He did tie the rope to the car.
Pete: But he just did what we told him to do.
Sandy: Now he knows better.
Pete: We can't let him take all the blame.
Sandy: What do you want to do? Tell your father that it was *your* fault that the trailer got damaged?
Pete gulped. He wanted to do the right thing, but . . .

THE TEACHER STOPS READING. SHE LOOKS AT THE CLASS

TEACHER: What is happening here?
PUPIL: Pete's in trouble. His father told him – no tricks.
PUPIL: Sandy doesn't care.
TEACHER: What will happen now?
PUPIL: I think Pete will tell his father.
PUPIL: I don't. Pete's afraid of Sandy.
TEACHER: (to first pupil) Why don't you come up and show us what you think Pete will do. Whom will you need to help you?

ENACTMENT: Pete and his father take part.

Pete: So you see, Dad, I didn't mean to play a trick that would cause so much damage. Now Ronnie's in trouble.
Dad: Let's go see Sandy and his father.

A NEW ENACTMENT: Pete, his father; Sandy and his father.

Sandy: I did not. I didn't do a thing. Pete thought the whole thing up!
Pete: That isn't true, Sandy. You said, "No treat? Okay, he gets a trick!"
Sandy's father: We'll have to get at the truth of this. Let's go ask Ronnie Hite what happened. (END OF ENACTMENT)

TEACHER: What is happening here, boys and girls?
CLASS: Sandy's scared.
He's trying to lie his way out.
TEACHER: What will happen now?
PUPIL: Ronnie will tell how it really happened.
TEACHER: How is Pete feeling?
PUPIL: He's mad at Sandy for lying!
TEACHER: How about the two fathers?
PUPIL: They don't know.
TEACHER: What happens next?
PUPIL: They go to Ronnie's house.
TEACHER: Whom will we need?

NEXT SCENE: Ronnie's house.
ENACTMENT: Sandy and Pete, their fathers; Ronnie Hite, his mother and father.

Sandy's father: Ronnie, you tell us what happened.

Ronnie: We were following those big boys in cowboy costume. They knocked on a trailer door. An old man came to the door. They said, "Trick or treat!" The old man said, "Go away or I'll throw dish water on you!" When he closed the door, the bigger boy said, "We'll give him a trick." He cut a clothes line and tied it to the trailer. He called me over and said, "Can you tie a knot?" I said sure, so he said, "Tie this rope to the bumper of that car." I did it. Then a man came out of the next trailer. We hid. He got into the car and started it – and it pulled the old man's trailer off its blocks."

Sandy's father: Sandy, did you tell Ronnie to do this?

Pete: He did!

Sandy: I didn't think it would pull the trailer off the blocks. I thought it would just jerk the trailer a little and the rope would break.

(END OF ENACTMENT)

TEACHER: Let's stop here. What do you think, boys and girls? Could it happen this way?

PUPIL: Yes, it could. Someone always tells. You can't hide it.

TEACHER: What happens now?

PUPIL: They have to pay the $200 damages.

TEACHER: Who?

PUPIL: All the fathers!

PUPIL: The boys should work.

PUPIL: Ronnie shouldn't have to pay. It wasn't his fault.

PUPIL: Yes, he should. He did what Sandy told him to.

TEACHER: You are saying that Ronnie could have refused to do what the big boys told him to do?

PUPIL: That's right. He could've said, "No, I won't do it."

PUPIL: Pete didn't do anything.

PUPIL: Well, he didn't go away. He could've said no, too.

PUPIL: Yeah. He laughed at the idea.

TEACHER: We've seen one way this story could end. Is there some other way this kind of problem might be solved?

PUPIL: Well, if Pete hadn't gone along with Sandy on the trick they might not be in this trouble.

TEACHER: Will you come up and show us what you mean? Whom will you need?

PUPIL: I'll need Sandy and the little guys.

ENACTMENT: Pete, Sandy, and the two little boys.

Pete: Oh, no, we don't! Sandy, I promised my Dad no tricks.

Sandy: *You* promised. I didn't. Hey, you kids. Come here. You – take this rope. Tie a knot around that car bumper.

Pete: Don't do it, Ronnie. We'll all get in trouble.
(STOP ENACTMENT)

TEACHER: Let's stop here. Class, what is happening?
CLASS: Sandy is going to be sore at Pete!
Pete'll lose a friend.
TEACHER: What is Pete's problem?
PUPIL: He wants to keep Sandy's friendship.
PUPIL: But he promised his Dad – no tricks!
TEACHER: Do you sometimes have problems like this? You want to go along with a friend, but he does something you don't like?
PUPIL: Yes, but Sandy wasn't worth it. He was a bully.
PUPIL: He had lots of ideas.
PUPIL: But he let a little kid take the rap.
PUPIL: Anyway, that was too mean a trick to play on the old man. Maybe soaping his windows would've been okay. But not pulling a trailer off its blocks!
TEACHER: We've seen several ways in which this situation might end. In your opinion, what was the main problem in this story?
PUPIL: Well, you want to mind your father, but a friend gets you into trouble.
PUPIL: It's more than that. You don't like to get your friends mad, so you just go along, like Pete did.
TEACHER: If I understand you, you're saying that sometimes, when you don't actually mean to, you get in trouble because you're afraid to go against a friend?
PUPIL: Yes. They call you chicken if you don't go along.

To sum up

Our purpose in doing role-playing is to help children explore, in spontaneous enactments, the consequences of choices in human behavior. It is our belief that, by guiding children into an exploration of the consequences of their decisions, we help them to become sensitive to the impact of their choices and actions on other people. In this process, it is our hope that we help them to develop individual integrity and a sense of group responsibility.

Children's feelings

If we wish to work seriously with the feelings of children, we must concern ourselves more than ever before with the life situations of children *which are important to them.* Usually, the school has set up certain learning situations to which pupils are expected to respond in "acceptable" ways. And youngsters have learned to put on a cloak of school behavior that fits the demands of teachers.

But children live through many of their most crucial situations outside the

classroom: on the sand lot, the playground, the neighborhood street, and in the home. It is in these situations that many tensions are built up and conflicts resolved to the best of children's abilities.

Today's youngster is tossed back and forth by the cross-currents of the contemporary scene. If his parents are migratory workers, he has the problem of never putting down roots, never belonging to a group. If he is a middle-class child, he is subject to all the anxieties and pressures of his class – such as appropriate clothing, manners, care of property, parental levels of aspiration and related concerns.

If he is a child of a broken home, he may have problems of adjusting to two sets of parents and even two sets of brothers and sisters. Or, he may be presented with one code of behavior at school and find another one operating in his home and neighborhood.

In direct proportion to the complexities and tensions of present-day life, children build anxieties, fears and angers which eventually affect their personality structures. Increasingly, teachers are realizing that a vital function of the school is that of helping children to understand their own life-situations and to develop adequate ways of meeting their problems and releasing tensions.

A program in intergroup education is at best fragmentary unless it recognizes that:

- The experiences young children have will build into their personalities some basic attitudes toward other people.
- Children need to explore the critical life-situations in which they find themselves, with opportunities to try solutions for these problems, *under skillful educational guidance,* and with the support and criticism of their peers.

After children have investigated "how it feels to be different" on their own everyday level of experience – *i.e.,* as the red-head, or the boy who wears glasses, or the youngster who limps – they may be able and ready to identify with "how it feels to be a Negro in a white culture" and with other facts of intergroup relations. Deepened sensitivity and insight into the problems and life of oneself and others is the cornerstone on which improved intergroup relations will rest.

The special values of role-playing

If we take various life problems of children and play them out in the classroom, using the technics of role-playing, we can help children *explore their feelings about the situations in life which most fundamentally shape their attitudes and values.* We can bridge the artificial barrier of the school walls and bring the typical problems of the family, the neighborhood and playground into the classroom where children can work on them and resolve them with the help of the group and the mature guidance of their teacher.

In spontaneous dramatization (role-playing or sociodrama, as it is variously called) pupils can be permitted to make a wrong choice and find out for themselves that it is not satisfactory. Since they are only practicing, they can discard

a choice when it proves inadequate or undesirable, and try another solution.

An important element in sociodrama is the procedure of going into action immediately, without much discussion or planning. The first acting of roles is, therefore, impulsive and *spontaneous,* and reveals the immediate feelings of children about the problem involved rather than how they think adults *want* them to feel and act. If we are to help pupils to modify attitudes, we must first get the youngsters to reveal frankly what they would do in a problem situation. Then we have something to work with. Then the class and the teacher can explore together, through discussion and problem-solving procedures, the consequences of the various suggestions offered.

Children enjoy dramatics

Two facts stand out in experience with role-playing problem-stories:

1. Children enjoy unrehearsed dramatics, are eager for it, can't get enough of it and keep asking for more.
2. Dramatic stories posing realistic problems provide great impetus for launching younger people into serious thinking and discussion.

Main concerns of role-playing

Some important goals to which role-playing can contribute:

- Decision-making in interpersonal and intergroup relations.
- The development of individual integrity and group responsibility.
- Growth in problem-solving capacity of children
    a) In problem definition
    b) In generation of alternatives
    c) In anticipating consequences
    d) In sensitivity toward self and others
- The delineation of the value dimension in problem-solving as an aspect of citizenship education (social studies).
- The use of role-playing as a discovery process, utilizing decision-making in action, in which *students decide for themselves,* as a result of their explorations.
- The teacher's role as one of *facilitator of children's ideas,* not as the explainer and concluder.

Part II

HOW TO GUIDE A ROLE-PLAYING SESSION

A teacher who desires to use role-playing as described in the previous section will want to employ the following steps:*

- "Warming up" the group.
- Selecting the participants.
- Preparing the audience to observe alertly.
- Role-playing.
- Discussing and evaluating.
- Re-playing the revised roles.
- Sharing experience, and generalizing.

In this section we will describe each phase in detail.

The warm-up — for awareness and identification

The "warm-up" serves several very important functions:

It acquaints the participating group with the problem at hand. It arouses awareness of their need to learn ways of dealing with the problem. And it involves the group emotionally in a specific situation, and thereby helps them to identify with individuals coping with the tangle of human relations to which the problem gives rise.

The teacher may begin her warm-up by saying, "I'm sure that every one of you, some time or another, has been in an embarrassing situation – and believed that a lie was the only way out of it." Or, "How many of you have sometimes felt that your parents were partial to one of your brothers or sisters?" Or, "Sometimes our friends want us to do something that our parents do not permit, and we get into a lot of trouble, trying to please both sides." Or, "You're not invited to a party because you're colored or go to a different church from your classmates."

The teacher's purpose is to get enough response from members of the listening group to make them realize that each of them, that everybody, on occasion, has had to face such problems. And that she is aware that they get into difficulties and is sympathetic and wants to help; that, in fact, many adults are on their side.

The problem under discussion must, of course, be one that is important to them. It must be one which they recognize, one which has baffled them, so that they actually do feel a need to learn how to cope with it.

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*Adapted from Charles E. Hendry, Ronald Lippitt, and Alvin Zander: "Reality Practice as Educational Method," *Psychodrama Monograph No. 9,* Beacon House, New York, 1947. A fine discussion of role-playing.

The next step of the warm-up is to express the general problem in the vivid details of a specific example. Doing that will involve the group emotionally.

An effective tool for this purpose is a story.

Not just any story, but one which presents a problem of human relations in terms which are both believable and interesting. The basic situation of the story must be real and important to the group. The more convincing the story is, the more excitingly it develops, the more strongly will the listeners "identify" with the fictional characters.

The point is that if the pupils feel keenly about the fate of the story characters, they will react keenly afterward. They will participate in role-playing in direct proportion to the degree to which their sympathies and partisanship were aroused, or their convictions were affronted.

The story should be tied into the discussion and the role-playing that will follow.

The teacher may say simply: "I'm going to read you a story about a boy who got into the sort of trouble we're talking about. This story isn't finished. While I'm reading, you may think of how it might end. Perhaps some of you will want to act out ways in which this boy can solve his problem."

This last point is important. It is a challenge to the listening group. Their attention is sharpened. They will listen more alertly. They will identify themselves with various of the story characters and thus get as much meaning as possible out of the situation, so as to be able to deal with it effectively.

After the warm-up story has been read, the teacher helps the group move into discussion and then into role-playing.

Children are a wonderful audience. Less inhibited than grown-ups, they vent their feelings, as they listen, with groans and sighs and comments and handclaps. Even their facial expressions and body postures are eloquent. And after the reading is over, (if the story has been truly meaningful to them) they have much to say and are in a hurry to say it. They are boiling over with responses.

Merely by asking, "Well, how do you think this story will end?" the teacher releases pent-up debate. Suggestions rain at her, often with much heat and emphasis.

Selecting participants for the role-playing

After a short discussion, the teacher asks the class to describe the characters of the story briefly, and to tell how they felt as trouble weighed upon them. Then she asks for volunteers to play these characters' parts in acting out an ending to the story.

Usually several children are quite vocal about what they think will happen and what individual characters will do. In such pupils' expression of ideas the teacher gets clues as to which children are identifying with the various roles and *how* they identify.

She may wish to choose children who indicate an anti-social solution so as

to provide opportunity for the exploration of such a solution. Or, she may select a child who will play an authoritarian, or strict middle-class mother or father role, knowing that this role typifies a problem faced by many of her young people.

Sometimes the teacher may select a child to play a part because she knows that the child needs to identify with the role, or needs to place himself in another's shoes, as a learning experience.

Primarily, the teacher chooses children who reveal by their remarks that they have identified with certain characters in the story. Usually she avoids choosing, for the first enactment, an individual who will give an adult-oriented, socially acceptable solution. Using him first may result in the shutting off of exploration of how children actually do think and feel in such situations. Of course, after a thorough investigation of the pupils' honest feelings about the problem, shown by their impulsive actions and their expressions of the values they hold, the teacher may then come back to the child who will give an answer which is mature and acceptable to most adults.

Before beginning the enactment, the actors plan what they are going to do. They do not prepare any dialogue but simply decide, in a general way, on a line of action. The role-playing has most value when completely spontaneous; for that reason, set speeches and detailed plotting are never used.

Preparing the audience to observe the enactment

Before role-playing starts, the teacher prepares the listening group to observe the enactment intelligently – to participate through observation.

One of the important qualities of sociodrama is its power to evoke discussion. The value of this discussion, of course, will depend upon how much meaning the group got out of watching the role-playing. It is wise, therefore, for the teacher to alert the class to careful observation.

She may remind them that they will have a chance to *re-enact* the sociodrama, to show how *they* think the problem-story should be solved. She may warn them that laughter spoils the exploration. They may have ideas about solutions which they believe are more appropriate than the ending now to be offered.

The enactment

The role-players then put on their enactment. The actual performance may be brief, or quite extended. Length isn't necessarily important. The actors may end the story with a mere question and answer; or they may see so many facets of the problem, and have such mixed feelings about it, that finding a solution is a matter of *working one out* in an emotional conflict of values and ideas.

No actor is expected to present his role flawlessly; mistakes are taken for granted. So are occasional lapses into less than formal language and gesture;

too much censorship inhibits spontaneity. The pupils should be helped to understand, too, that the way an actor portrays a role has no reflection upon him as a person. He is simply acting out a characterization as he sees it. He will not be condemned because of his interpretation of the role by the teacher or anyone else. This is very important.

Discussion and evaluation

The next step is that of discussion and evaluation of how well the actors portrayed the roles they assumed, and how well the problem of human relations was solved.

Usually no prompting by the teacher is required. Discussion is fast and furious. The pupils are keyed up. They bubble over with comment. They pour out criticisms on how well the characters were portrayed and how well the idea was dramatized, and offer suggestions on how to solve the problem more adequately.

It is these suggestions for *improvement* of behavior in the specific situation which are so important.

The role-players, who tried to solve the problem of human relations under attack, are told different and possibly better ways of dealing with the problem. Members of the observing group, too, in this process of evaluation, weigh the merits of a variety of solutions to the difficulty.

The whole group is experiencing, in a very active sense, the stress and exhilaration of problem-solving.

Here, too, the teacher can provide vital guidance, by giving the class the intellectual tools they need. She can help them to familiarize themselves with the steps of problem-solving:

- Defining or redefining the problem.
- Considering alternative courses of action.
- Weighing the consequences of each possible choice.
- Choosing new possibilities on the basis of wider considerations and deeper insights as analysis of the situation proceeds.
- Trying out a choice to test its validity as a solution of the problem.

The re-enactment

Re-enactment is the next step in role-playing. So often, in life, one wishes for a second chance to solve a dilemma. In role-playing, now, this second chance is forthcoming. So is a third and fourth chance. *Facing problems on a practice level, you have all the chances you need.* This is the great value of role-playing. You can arrive at a good solution to a human difficulty through as much trial and error as is necessary.

The actors play their roles over and over again, improving their interpreta-

tions in the light of the suggestions they receive.

Or new actors take over the roles to demonstrate alternative solutions.

Sometimes a member of the sociodrama precipitates a situation which leaves another role-player at the end of his ideas. The teacher may then have to (1) guide him indirectly into further action by asking questions, or (2) select another pupil to take this role who seems to have ideas on how to respond to the situation, or (3) cut the scene short and start class discussion.

Re-enactments give opportunity for a helpful variety of approaches to solving the basic problem. New actors may take over the roles and portray them differently. Or the original actors may switch roles (i.e., the "son" of one enactment may play the "father" in a succeeding one) in order to get *inside* roles with which they were in conflict, so as to get a better understanding of other facets in the tangle of human relations and of other people's feelings in the situation.

A surprising number of episodes may be enacted and re-enacted in a short period of time. It is possible for five or six versions of a situation, with intervening discussion, to take place within an hour.

This moving back and forth from acting to discussing to acting again is a very effective learning sequence. It is much more fruitful than just "talking over" a problem. It is more fruitful than *telling* youngsters to avoid bigotry; more effective than exhortation.

It is far more effective, when trying to help a young person understand how his action may affect another individual, to have him *step into the other's shoes and feel what the other feels,* than simply to tell him, for example, that it is unkind to mock another's religion or race or other difference.

Sharing experience and generalizing

The last step in role-playing may be termed a period of sharing experience and generalizing from it.

The teacher may ask the group: "Do you know anyone to whom this kind of thing has happened?"

Usually individuals will volunteer to tell of incidents similar to that in the problem-story.

This sharing of experience, this exploration of the consequences of behavior, achieves several important purposes.

It helps anxious young people to discover that the troubles affecting them occur to other people, too. To *many* other people. In this awareness a worried individual finds relief and reassurance.

In addition, young people acquire attitudes and values which condition their daily behavior.

Out of the enactments, out of the criticisms and suggestions and re-enactments, out of the excited clash of opinion, the group hammers out general principles of conduct. In this period, now, of sharing and generalizations, these

principles will find expression. They will be especially important to the individual pupil because they bear the authority of his own peers.

Permissiveness and spontaneity

In a role-playing session the teacher is permissive. Exactly what does this term mean?

For years we teachers have insisted that classroom behavior be "nice," restrained and "socially acceptable." If we are to work with the feelings of children, we shall have to develop an atmosphere in which children are permitted to express their feelings honestly, which often means that they will be less than "nice."

Of course, in a classroom situation there are necessary limits placed upon expression of feelings. Children cannot conduct themselves with the almost complete freedom allowed them in a play-therapy room. But the teacher can help a child by recognizing his feelings, then channeling expression of them through various media – role-playing, dramatic play, painting, clay, rhythms, etc.

An important technique for helping the child explore his feelings is the method of reflecting them back to him. This is based upon the non-directive counseling procedure which has been developed by Carl R. Rogers.

The teacher can help a young person by telling him, when he's upset, "You're angry." He responds, "Yes, I am. They won't let me play with them!" In this process the teacher shows the child that she knows how he feels, she sympathizes with him, she *feels with him,* and helps him to explore and clarify his trouble.

In brief, the teacher establishes a warm, friendly relationship with children. She accepts them as they are. They soon learn that they can express their emotions to her without condemnation, and will get help, assistance and support. She maintains a deep and real respect for children's ability to solve their own problems if given a chance to do so. The responsibility to make choices and to institute change is the child's.

It is only as each child gains insight into his life situations and accepts certain solutions as wise for him, that he will modify his behavior in increasingly mature patterns.

The permissive atmosphere makes spontaneity possible.

Spontaneity is necessary in role-playing. That is why, when planning the enactment, the actors do *not* work out details of dialogue and action. A detailed plot would be a cage or harness inhibiting the emotional identification of the players with the roles they are assuming. The actors, therefore, merely decide upon a general direction in which to move – and their speech and actions are improvised as they go along, and are consequently honest in impulse and natural.

Group approval or disapproval is still apt to operate, even in a role-playing situation. Here, as elsewhere, some individuals are likely to go along with the crowd. In the discussion, if consensus seems to lean toward a particular solution of a problem, some members of the class will appear to accept that solution,

though, to their own minds, it is not good.

The sensitive teacher is alert to guard against mere conformity. She will emphasize that open-minded evaluation of conduct in the light of consequences is the group goal. She will give dissenters support in thinking through alternatives.

The audience, too, is learning

Only a few members of the class play roles at one time, of course; but the audience, as well as the participants, is going through a learning process. For that matter, so is the teacher.

In role-playing, an individual is keyed up to see his own behavior in a role. The result is that his susceptibility to learning is at a maximum.

It is important for the teacher to help the class understand that role-playing is a shared experience for further learning in which every member of the group may take turns at enacting a role, and in which *it is not the individual who is being evaluated but only the part which he is assuming*. The way an actor portrays a role has no reflection upon him as a person. He is not going to be condemned as an individual, and is not going to condemn the next person playing the role as an individual.

In consequence, the ego does not raise impassable barriers against criticism, against insights leading to change of behavior.

This attitude is coupled with another factor: each participant is a member of the observing audience until he, too, takes part in an enactment; he is geared up to evaluating the acting that goes on because he may be the next one to act. He is, therefore, in a mood of open-minded self-awareness. He is receptive to suggestions for improvement.

This is a very promising state of feeling for character development. For it is especially in the area of human relations that it is difficult to bring people to new ways of behaving.

Role-playing is sometimes termed "reality practice" or "reality testing." This is what it often is: practice in living.

> "In real life, there is no chance to retreat once one has made a decision, or said the particular words. If what has been said or done is inappropriate, it is too bad; in such situations most people have evolved defense mechanisms which are only rarely adequate. Role-playing is remarkably useful in preparing such persons to handle personal problems *by allowing them to explore on the play level* some more appropriate ways of dealing with other individuals. There is no grave penalty for failure; in fact, failure is expected and accepted. . . . The most carefully analyzed generalizations can never provide this facsimile of real life. . . . Role-playing is one way of releasing the person a little so that he can explore in an unusually permissive atmosphere some new and better patterns of behavior."*

*Jean D. Grambs, "Dynamics of Psychodrama in the Teaching Situation," *Sociatry*, March, 1948, pp. 393-400.

If the observers shared during the warm-up discussion in defining the problem and the human relations involved, they have a proprietary interest in the sociodrama. If, moreover, the whole group cooperated in deciding what the characters of the drama were like, the audience's identification with the roles is keener still. The audience is thus exploring "live" facsimiles of conduct.

Even the teacher learns

The teacher can learn much, in the enactment, about the personality and needs of her pupils. It is valuable, for example, for her to notice how an individual brings other people into the dramatization; whether he is able to remain sensitive to the feelings and behavior of other actors, or whether his responses are determined by his own needs only.

The teacher can observe, over a period of time, which roles pupils readily accept and which types of parts they feel resistant toward enacting. Resistance can show itself in a number of ways: an actor laughs and looks at the audience; he breaks out of character and asks for further instruction; he burlesques his part; or simply stops and says that he cannot play it.

Some don'ts for role-playing

For a long time teachers have operated on the theory that only socially acceptable behavior can be permitted in the classroom. The result is that certain predispositions exist.

We tend to explore until we find the child who has the "right" answer, then we call on him to present the final and authoritative word to the class. *Don't!* This shuts off real feeling and thinking and deprives the teacher of the knowledge of how her pupils *actually do* solve their problems. We cannot guide toward socially acceptable solutions to child problems unless we know how children behave and can help them to examine the consequences of that behavior.

We talk too much.

Teachers are so eager to have children come to proper conclusions that they tend to "put the words in the children's mouths." *Don't!*

The only generalizations that will actually modify behavior are those that come from insight – from a discovery of relationships. Be patient; wait. Insight may come to your young people tomorrow, or maybe not until many of them have gone on into another class. Sometimes we must be content merely to start a process of feeling and thinking.

In our concern to get the outcomes we have in mind, we teachers often "set the stage" so rigidly that there is only one path for thinking to follow.

For example, it is a mistake to talk too long about the significance of a problem in the story (the warm-up), in order to get intellectual verbalizations about it. Again – *don't*. For if you do, children begin to deliberate on what

the adults are wanting of them. They explore action on a verbal level (trying out the teacher) and then in the enactments they give back adult solutions to the story problem. If our purpose is *to explore the impulsive behavior of children,* then let's *act* (role-play) first, and *think* afterward (discuss and evaluate). We do, of course, want to help children to "think" first, then *act on thinking*. But that will come later, as a result of exploring with them their impulsive action and helping them to see what "thinking first" may offer.

Tact

Tact is an important attribute of the person directing role-playing. Young people of minority groups are especially sensitive – though they may mask it very well – to comments about their characteristics. Teachers need to plan carefully for these children.

If it is a different sort of problem, such as that of honesty, and one of the students in the room has been questioned on suspicion of looting lockers, obviously it is necessary to safeguard him from being openly talked about and condemned. The problem should be examined in terms that remove it from the immediate situation. In fact, it may be wise to postpone such a discussion until the actual incident has been largely forgotten.

Another risk is that of self-exposure.

In any group enterprise of this sort – in dramatic play, in sociodrama, even in mere discussion – it may happen that an individual will expose himself to ridicule or rejection by being too frank about himself. In the heat of argument, when a permissive atmosphere has been established, a young person may reveal some past behavior which will hurt his status among his peers. The alert teacher will try to play down such revelations. In starting discussion, it is wise to ask, "Do you know anyone to whom this sort of thing has happened?" This is a wiser device than asking, "Has this sort of thing happened to you?"

Also, the careful teacher will not push a student to elaborate upon a comment when to do so may cause him to betray that the example he's telling about is himself. When the teacher senses resistance, she should move on to another student or topic in a casual manner so that no attention is drawn to the pupil's retreat from self-exposure.

Possible guilt feelings

Sometimes the discussion may tend to arouse guilt feelings among members of the role-playing group. The problem being worked on may be, for example, that of lying to parents in order to hide activity which has not been permitted. So often a youngster will go to a movie, buy a toy, or indulge in other activities which parents have prohibited – then cover up by lying. Such lying may be attacked by some members of the class. It is the teacher's responsibility, then,

to give the group healthier perspectives upon the matter. She needs to help the group to understand that, at one time or another, every one of us has succumbed to temptation of some sort. She needs to emphasize that what is important is to grow in understanding and self-respect and responsibility, so that one uses increasingly *better* judgment both as to choice of behavior and as to the ways of handling the consequences of that behavior.

By so guiding the situation, the teacher can replace guilt feelings with reassurance. Here, in discussion (as so often happens in the role-playing itself) an important relief of tensions is provided.

A safeguard against damage to an individual's self-esteem lies in the fact that role-playing is, in a sense, self-limiting. If discussion cuts into painful areas, the group will shrink away defensively, closing up in self-protection, and the session will come to a halt.

Part III

ROLE-PLAYING AND ITS PLACE IN THE CURRICULUM

Increasingly, in curriculum planning, we are becoming concerned with analyzing educational experiences for their effect upon behavior. We are saying that *learning is changed behavior.* And we are concerned to help children and youth develop behavior consonant with democratic human relations.

How does democracy get into personality?

How do we modify the feeling, doing, thinking processes of young people so that they live well with themselves and with others?

This problem merits a multiple approach. A curriculum program designed to serve the purposes of better human relations and of intergroup education must be concerned with interpersonal problems, social problems and intergroup problems.

A child who is tied up in knots because of unsolved emotional problems – conflicts with parents or siblings, inability to get along with age-mates, etc. – is in no state to identify with intergroup dilemmas; he is too busy trying to live with and resolve his immediate personal difficulties. He needs to be helped to understand his crucial life-situations, to see that he is not alone in his problems. The school, by providing in the curriculum opportunity for such exploration, *with the support and opposition of his age-mates,* (that is, through group processes such as role-playing) can help children to learn to face and accept social realities.

Social problems, appropriate to the maturity and life experiences of the children involved, are also a part of this multiple approach. Individual problems need to be seen as a part of larger social settings. For example, a child who feels imposed upon by his mother's continual demands that he care for a younger brother can be helped to understand the pressures upon the mother in the small family which no longer includes a grandmother or maiden aunt to relieve a busy parent.

Only after children and youth have learned to meet with some adequacy their own interpersonal problems are they ready to identify with, and attempt to resolve, those problems in intergroup education which are not directly pertinent to their immediate life situations. Sometimes children will need to have experienced how it feels to be different (to have red hair, wear glasses or limp, for example) before they can explore how it feels to be Jewish or Negro or of a minority ethnic group.

Therefore a truly comprehensive program in intergroup education must be built upon a broad base, including interpersonal and social problems.

Children need curricular experiences which help them to understand that all behavior is caused.

Role-playing can be an excellent tool for exploring the causes of behavior. It can be incorporated into any phase of the school program when appropriate.

For example, a discussion in social studies on the plight of displaced persons can lead to role-playing the difficulties which such people encounter when coming to a new land. Or the mistreatment of a child new to the school can be the opportunity for using a problem story based on discrimination and working out a solution to it. Role-playing can become an everyday tool for stimulating, exploring and refining experience. Role-playing can provide, in the classroom, *practice* in the real-life necessity of facing crises and dilemmas and dealing with them with the effective tools of problem-solving procedures. Role-playing can serve many purposes in the curriculum. In social studies children can role-play a wide variety of situations, such as:

- How it feels to be the *little,* then *big* brother, when the new baby is brought home.
- How it felt to have to choose sides in the American Revolution; exploring a family's doubts and concerns in Boston during the Boston Tea Party.
- How it felt to be told you were free, when you had always been a slave; exploring the dilemmas that faced the freed families after the Civil War.
- How it feels to be a member of another culture – Japanese, French, English, Mexican, Indian, etc.
- How it feels to be new to a community.
- How it feels to be a member of a city council.
- How it feels to be a Catholic, a Jew or a member of another religion faced with prejudice.

Or, in the daily routine of school life, the teacher may use the many dilemmas of ordinary events to explain feelings and seek solutions in such situations as:

- A school yard fight: using observers to role-play what they saw and how they interpreted the issues, as well as giving those involved an opportunity to express their feelings.
- A community situation in which there is controversy over policy, such as the use of recreational facilities or the maintenance of restrictive covenants.
- A club program: how it feels to be excluded.

In the language arts program there are many golden opportunities to role-play situations presented in literature, in order to consider other ways in which people might resolve the life situations described.

Sometimes the teacher may bring in problems for role-playing which some children are actually facing in real life. Sometimes a film or problem-pictures can be used instead of a problem-story; sometimes pupils can create their own narratives.

Role-playing and intergroup education

Curriculum can be planned to provide a program in intergroup education.

It is true, of course, that younger children who have never met discrimination may be merely puzzled by such problems when they are presented in direct fashion. However, they will understand problems having to do with belonging, acceptance and rejection, with authority; and dealing with such life-situations is preparation for intergroup education. In fact, such a program becomes an important aspect of mental health education. In the process of learning to understand others, one learns to understand oneself.

An intergroup education program should develop such attitudes as:

- Concern about inequities.
- Understanding that people are what they are because of their experiences.
- Awareness of causes of behavior.
- Acceptance of duties as citizens.
- Attitudes of respect for cultures, religions, institutions of others.
- Knowledge that members of a group are interdependent.
- The value of living contacts with many different peoples.
- The need to control and get rid of tensions that arise from feelings of superiority and inferiority.
- The need to accept responsibilities.
- The need to learn to appraise one's own potentialities.

Increasingly, there is recognition that the intergroup problems of our society cannot be dealt with indirectly, in gradualistic programs. The daily reports in our newspapers chronicle the bitter and often heroic efforts to confront the American people with a major task of our democracy – the integration of all its people into an equal, pluralistic society. To this end, teachers must make their contribution by providing confrontation for students (appropriate to their maturity levels) with the unfinished tasks of our society, and to support analyses with relevant information.

While young children may begin, as we suggest, with how it feels to be left out, to be different, the time comes when they are ready to confront how it feels to be colored in a white society, how it feels to be the "white" who condones or does nothing about discrimination. The teacher working in a Negro ghetto may need to help children to develop pride in themselves and in their own people's history at the same time that the teacher working in suburbia needs to help children to overcome ethnocentric, ignorant attitudes toward culturally or racially different people.

The literature on cultural diversity is growing and curricula for intergroup education are increasingly more pertinent and helpful.* It is not our claim that any one technique or set of suggestions can provide the educational program

*Jean D. Grambs, *Methods and Materials in Intergroup Education,* The Anti-Defamation League and The Lincoln Filene Center for Citizenship and Public Affairs, Tufts University, published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967.

needed. Many strategies and materials and media will be required as well as fundamentally new approaches to schooling.

Role-playing can be used as an important tool for realizing these purposes. As problems in human relations arise in school, the teacher can open them up and extend them into major areas of the curriculum.

For example, a refugee child may be mocked and teased on the playground because he wears "queer" clothes and pronounces English "comically" and is "dumb" about the most ordinary things like baseball and television and how to drive a car or play marbles. By helping the children to identify with this youngster, to step into his shoes in a role-playing session, the teacher can work toward building attitudes of respect for other cultures, for understanding that people are what they are because of their past experiences, that many different ways of behaving are acceptable. She can work toward these objectives through the social studies, through the examination of how people solve problems of living in other parts of the world and how climate and land and resources and history give them customs which are different from our own but just as worthy of respect.

Intergroup tensions of varying degree exist in all American communities. Defense industries have been magnets drawing many thousands of workers from farms to factories, from the South and Middlewest to the Pacific Coast and the North, from low-paid jobs to highly paid ones in industry and laboratories. In recent years we have had a variety of migratory movements of population. Wherever new people have come into old communities, problems have arisen. Lack of housing has been one difficulty. Differences in speech and manners and dress and standards of conduct have caused others. Differences in color and religion have been sources of serious conflict, misunderstanding and tension. The urbanization of rural folk is yet another, major source of intergroup problems.

The school can help to ease such tensions by studying its own community, by examining the background of historical and social forces which have brought tensions into existence, by applying promising techniques, such as role-playing, to the development of intergroup insights and understanding.

It has become recognized that in working for intergroup harmony it isn't enough merely to stop a fight between a Johnny Smith and a Pedro Ramirez. When a sheriff disperses a mob throwing rocks at a home newly purchased by a Chinese war veteran, the officer is merely suppressing hostility, not eradicating it. Such hostility will flare up later. *A vital job in intergroup education is to permit the development of personalities in which hostility and aggressions are not accumulated to be vented against scapegoats.* A task of intergroup education is to help young people grow up into adults who have too much insight, who are too well-educated, to harbor prejudice against other people for such reasons as differences of color or religion or social class. To this end, role-playing of problem-stories of children's own life situations can be a helpful tool.

Part IV

A STRATEGY FOR INTERGROUP EDUCATION

In the process of growing up, the young child grows through the stage of discovering who he is, and what he is good for: he builds a picture of himself, a self-concept. This concept of self is very much a product of how adults and children have treated him as he has interacted with his environment.

If the young child experiences warmth and kindly support in his initial explorations, he develops confidence in his own feelings and is more likely to relate well to others. If he has learned that his world is full of hostility and threat, he becomes distrustful and withdraws from open, confident relations with others.

While it is clear that the distressful conditions of extreme poverty create their characteristic threats for children, it is also true that majority group children growing up in middle-class suburbia under conditions of pressure to achieve in order to enter status schools and colleges, to attain prestigeful recognition, also experience self-doubt, hostile feelings toward others and depersonalized behavior.*

A program in intergroup education must recognize these initial circumstances and plan a series of educative experiences that seek to modify initially held attitudes and develop sensitivities and concern for others. Such a program must start where the child is, with his own feelings and experiences, and use them as a bridge to the feelings and needs of others. Therefore we suggest that teachers begin with the everyday events of school and neighborhood – how it feels to be new, to be left out, to have to live with a handicap – and gradually move out to problems of wider threat and stress – how it feels to be Mexican-American or Negro or Puerto Rican and to be dealt with differentially by society.

Children need practice in confronting interpersonal and intergroup problems in a progression that enables them to become sensitive to their feelings, first about self, then about others (peers, parents, other adults) and finally about groups. It is as they attempt to resolve problems that are typical of their own life situations, and explore the consequences to themselves and others, that they can respond with genuine feeling and learn to criticize and reconstruct their values. It is through this process that they can develop individual integrity and group responsibility.

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*See
Alice Miel, *The Short-Changed Children of Suburbia,* Anti-Defamation League, 1967.
Urie Bronfenberenner, "The Changing American Child," *Journal of Social Issues* XVII, #1 (1961) pp. 6-18.

Individual-group acceptance

THE SQUAWK BOX*

The problem:

The issue is accepting others; specifically, the responsibility of the group to respect and support the individual who is different.

Children can often be cruel to one another, and the group can be especially cruel to the youngster who is "different." An aspect of this problem is the frequent tendency of a group to choose for an honor a child who, though not meriting the specific recognition, is popular and a leader – meanwhile ignoring (and thereby rejecting) the individual who does merit the honor because he is not accepted by them.

Introducing the problem:

You may say, "This is a story about a boy who is somewhat different from his playmates. Because he seems odd to them and lacks the abilities they respect, he is unpopular; and because he is not liked, he is not elected to offices he is really very able to fill. This story stops but is not finished. As I read, try to think of ways in which the story could end."

Andy Eaton remembers the day that police cornered the mad dog out in front of the school gym. Andy has big reason to remember it. . . .

The boys were choosing up sides for a ball game when Andy came to school that morning, early. He stood by as Neil and Jerry took turns naming the fellows each wanted. Neil got five on his side. Jerry had just four. And Andy was the only boy not yet chosen.

"I don't want Andy," Jerry said. "He can't play ball."

"You've got to take him. There's nobody else."

"Ah, he couldn't catch a fly ball if it had handles on it."

Andy blushed. He knew that he was clumsy and slow. He wasn't very good at baseball or football, or any of the games the boys played. But he was a year older than most of the group, and bigger too.

"I beg your pardon," he said angrily, "but anybody could play ball if they practiced."

"Oh, I beg *your* pardon, but you couldn't bat your way out of a paper bag! Anyway, here comes Pete Neylor. Neil, I choose Pete!"

"I was here first," Andy insisted. "It's not very sporting to pass me up–"

"Sporting yet!" Neil hooted. "My word, Reginald, you'll get those sissy clothes mussed up if you play with us!"

"I mean it's not fair," Andy said. But he couldn't correct his clothes. His father had sent from England the gray flannel slacks and the smart blazer Andy was wearing.

"Aw, come on, let's play," Neil said. "We bat first!"

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*Fannie R. Shaftel and George Shaftel, *Role-Playing for Social Values: Decision-Making in the Social Studies*, copyright 1967. Reprinted by permission of Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

They all turned away from Andy, leaving him standing alone, ignoring him. Andy's fist clenched. He was mad enough to fight Neil and Jerry. Then he realized how upset his folks would be.

When the bell rang and the fifth-graders all trooped into the classroom, their teacher had a surprise for them. Everybody crowded up front to look at the surprise on Mrs. Chandler's desk.

"What is all this stuff?" Neil asked.

"That's a record player," Andy said, "and an amplifier and loudspeaker and a microphone."

"What's it for, Mrs. Chandler?" Jerry inquired.

"For our program this afternoon. Children, the record player wouldn't be loud enough to use in the gym for our pageant, so I borrowed this equipment to use."

"Our music'll be plenty loud, now," Andy said. His brown eyes were shining with excitement. "That's a dandy Marvel-tone amplifier and a swell twelve-inch speaker. That set'll give a ten-watt output and that's plenty for our gym. Mrs. Chandler, the set's not hooked up. Please, can I hook it up for you?" he asked eagerly. "The loudspeaker has to be connected in back here with this round-pronged plug, and the mike line is screwed onto this connection, here. Your turntable has two wires and they have to be put on at these terminals in back and the screws turned down tight."

"Oh, do you know how to run it, Andy?"

"Yes, ma'am, my Dad's taught me. This tone control here – you keep it set at ten for natural tone, unless you get feed-back. Then you can fiddle with the setting to cut it out–"

"Show-off!" Elsie Bates whispered.

Andy shut up, turning red.

"Thanks for explaining it, Andy," Mrs. Chandler said. "All right, children, back to your seats. We've got to plan."

That afternoon the class was to perform a Pageant of the West in the gym. The other classes were to be invited to watch. The pageant would show a wagon train moving along the Santa Fe Trail. Then abruptly the scene would shift to a tribe of Indians holding a big medicine smoke. Chiefs would argue about the danger of the incoming white men and the loss of buffalo. Older chiefs would counsel peace; but young hotheads would make shrill demands for battle, and would start a war dance around their camp fire.

"Remember, children," Mrs. Chandler reminded them, "we want to change from the wagon party to the Indian tribe very quickly. The shades will be drawn in the gym, and we'll have a spotlight on us. When the square dance ends, the light will go out. All of you pioneers run to the east doors and go outside. The children who are the Indians will then run in from the west hall. The light will come back on – and the Indians are to be sitting around a camp fire in front of their wigwams. We want to make the change very quickly. So remember. Soon as the music ends, pioneers run for the exit door – and Indians come running in."

Andy put up his hand. Mrs. Chandler nodded.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Chandler, but you've got to have somebody at the turntable to start the records and to change them, and somebody to run the amplifier."

"You're right, Andy. I'll handle the records myself. We'll have to choose a sound engineer."

"Let Jerry be the sound engineer," Neil called out.

"Jerry, do you know how to handle the equipment?" she asked.

"Well, some," Jerry said hesitantly.

Andy waved his hand, trying to get permission to speak again, but Sam Balch spoke up, "Yes, Jerry'd make a good engineer!" and Susan Kyle said, "Let Jerry do it."

Jerry was very popular. He was good at sports, and had a lot of ideas about games to play and talked and laughed a lot.

"Please, Mrs. Chandler," Andy said, "if I may, I'd like to be engineer."

"Children," Mrs. Chandler said, "why not have Andy as engineer—"

"We want Jerry!"

"Let's have a vote!"

"All right," Mrs. Chandler said, "those in favor of Andy raise your hands."

Andy sat in front. He could see no raised hands. Two hands were raised behind him.

"Those in favor of Jerry," Mrs. Chandler said.

All but two of the children raised their hands.

"Jerry, you're elected. Andy, you'll help Jerry, if he needs it, won't you?" Mrs. Chandler said.

Andy wanted to say "Sorry, but I certainly won't," but instead he swallowed hard and nodded.

"All right, now we'll have a rehearsal," Mrs. Chandler said.

The show was really a pantomime; that is, the children out on the gym floor would act everything out, would do their marching and dancing, while one person would explain everything going on through the microphone for all the audience to hear. Susan was the commentator who would do all the talking.

She began, "It was the spring of the year 1846—"

She stopped. Her voice wasn't coming from the loudspeaker.

Jerry was bent over the amplifier, turning the knobs.

Andy said, "I'm very sorry, but turning the phonograph knob doesn't turn on the microphone. Anyway, it's smart to wait until the tubes get warm before you turn up the juice."

"Sarcastic," somebody whispered.

Andy flushed. But he added, "Takes just a minute for the tubes to warm up."

"All right, Susan," Mrs. Chandler said, "start over."

Susan began again. The children settled back in pleased surprise as Susan's voice came full and rich and loud from the speaker, carrying clearly to every corner of the room.

"A-and at St. Louis and Independence wagons were being outfitted for the spring trip over the Trace to New Mexico and Cal—"

Squawk-howl-screech-meeow-rawr-wow!

Susan's voice was lost in the rumbling yowl that shrilled deafeningly from the loudspeaker, like the shriek of a giant panther wounded by an Apache arrow. Mrs. Chandler said something to Jerry, but the racket was so ear-filling that nobody could hear her words. Jerry looked at her, at Susan standing with her mouth open, at the amplifier, and didn't know what to do.

Andy reached over and gave the mike control a quick twist and the awful noise ended as if it had been chopped off with a hatchet.

By that time, the school principal, Mr. Bayley, had the room door open and was looking in, his face surprised and alarmed.

"What in the world was that?" he asked.

Mrs. Chandler pointed at the loudspeaker.

Andy said, "Feed-back."

"Feed-back. What's that?"

Andy didn't answer. He looked at Jerry. Jerry was the sound engineer.

"Whatever it is," Mrs. Chandler said, "it's awful. Jerry, what happened?"

Jerry looked at the amplifier, and edged away from it a little bit, as if expecting a dinohippopus to reach out of it and bite him.

Andy said, "If Jerry knew very much about a public address system he'd know that you get 'feed-back' inside a room, especially a small room. You don't have to, though, if you watch your controls."

"I was watching them," Jerry said angrily.

"I'm sorry, but keeping your eye on them isn't enough. You have to keep your hands on them too."

"Andy," Mrs. Chandler asked, "will you please show Jerry what to do?"

"Yes, ma'am. Jerry, you had your volume control up too high. Turn it lower, whenever she first starts to howl. Or turn your tone control down. Sometimes that'll head off a howl."

Mrs. Chandler said to Mr. Bayley, "I believe everything's under control now."

The principal shut the door, still looking doubtful.

"All right, Susan, start over," Mrs. Chandler said.

Susan wet her lips and lifted the microphone, shifting to a more comfortable position against the table.

But before she opened her mouth at all, before she spoke even a single word, from the loudspeaker came a whistle like a police siren screaming at the top of its voice. It was deafening, and growing shriller every instant.

The children clapped their hands to their ears. The room door was pushed open, and Mr. Bayley was there again, his mouth working as he yelled something which nobody could hear until Mrs. Chandler reached down and pulled the amplifier plug out of the wall connection. That wild whistle faded out like a rope jerked through a knot-hole.

"–heavens, you'll blow the roof off this building!" Mr. Bayley was shouting.

"Jerry, did you turn the wrong switch?" Mrs. Chandler said.

"No. Susan hadn't even started talking," Jerry protested.

Everybody looked at Andy then.

Andy raised his hand and waited until Mrs. Chandler nodded. Then he said, "It's really very simple. If Susan will just be careful not to step right in front of the speaker with a hot mike in her hand, she won't cause that noise again."

Susan backed away from the speaker as far as the microphone cord would allow.

"We're learning," Mrs. Chandler said to the principal.

He nodded, his mouth tight.

"Trial and error. Or should I say 'trial and terror'?" he murmured, and shut the door.

"Jerry," Mrs. Chandler suggested, "don't you think we'd better let Andy run the sound system?"

"Oh, no. I know all the tricks, now," Jerry insisted.

The rest of the rehearsal went off all right, then. Jerry watchfully squeezed off every howl as it began by closing down on the volume or tone. Mrs. Chandler nodded, satisfied.

"Fine. Put the equipment away, Jerry. Let's finish the costumes now."

Jerry looked at Andy and whispered, "The big expert! It doesn't take any brains to run a P.A. System."

"You certainly proved that," Andy retorted.

"Wise guy!" Jerry said.

Mrs. Chandler said, smiling, "With your help, Andy, I'm sure that Jerry has that wild microphone tamed so it won't howl this afternoon."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Chandler," Andy said, "but that microphone won't howl this afternoon – and it won't talk, either. It's going to be an awfully dead mike. We won't be able to use it."

"But why not, Andy?"

"Jerry's put it it on that window shelf, over the radiator. That's a crystal mike, and the Rochelle Salt crystals in it can't stand heat. Leaving it over a radiator like that is a sure way to make junk out of it."

"Jerry—"

But Jerry was already moving the mike to a wall cupboard.

"Wise guy!" he whispered at Andy. "Ain't you smart!"

The mad dog was a fine big Doberman Pinscher, a very well-mannered lady dog who came often to the school grounds. The children loved to pet her. However, she had not been inoculated, and somewhere, unluckily, she had picked up a rabies germ. And the germ had grown, spreading itself, until today the dog was doomed. Mrs. Weaver, who lived across the street from the school, saw the Doberman coming down the street, her jaws flecked with foam, carrying her head at a funny angle, saw her turn into the school grounds. Mrs. Weaver, alarmed, phoned the police. Then Mrs. Weaver had a second thought and phoned the school principal's office.

But Mr. Bayley and all the teachers and children were in the gym, watching the fifth grade's Pageant of the West.

From the loudspeaker was coming music made from a record on the turntable which Mrs. Chandler was tending. To that music her children were performing a square dance. Mrs. Chandler was smiling; her class had done very well.

Mr. Bayley's secretary came through a side door and hurried to Mrs. Chandler's side.

"Mrs. Chandler!" the secretary whispered. "Tell everybody to stay in the gym. Nobody's to go outside. There's a mad dog on the school grounds. She's out on the east side of the play yard!"

Mrs. Chandler nodded. "When this record ends, I'll just announce it over the loudspeaker," she said. And then Mrs. Chandler had an awful thought.

This was the music for the dance now being played. When the record ended, the wagon train party was to run to the east doors and go outside – while from the west hallway, the Indians would come into the gym to take their places. When this record ended, her fifth-graders would immediately go out those east doors!

"I can't stop the music!" she thought. "I don't dare shut off this music!" But the record was almost over. The needle was very close to the last grooves at the center of the disc.

"Children!" Mrs. Chandler shouted. *"Stay inside the gym! Don't go out those doors!"*

She hadn't been heard. The music was so loud that her voice hadn't a chance to carry over it.

Jerry, beside her, reached to turn down the volume of the music. Andy said, "No!" and stopped him. Andy seized the microphone, standing on the table before Susan. Andy turned up the mike volume control, but did not touch the phone volume control.

"Listen, Neil and Kenneth and the rest of you kids!" Andy said – and though the music had not diminished at all, his voice soared loud and clear over the dance melody, and traveled through the microphone and amplifier and out the loudspeaker with the music, so that everyone in the gym heard it plainly. "This dance is almost over," Andy said. "When it ends, stay in the gym. You are not to go out, but stay right in the middle of the floor where you are!" And then his voice seemed twice as loud, for the music had come to the end of the record. "Ellen!" Andy called to Ellen Barnes. "Mike, Barry! *Stay – where – you – are! Don't anybody leave the room!*"

By now, Mrs. Chandler was running to those east doors, so that she could stop any children who tried to go out.

It wasn't necessary. They all stood where they were, surprised and wondering.

"Don't be frightened, children," Mrs. Chandler said. "We're to stay where we are for awhile."

Now that the music had stopped, the Indians came rushing in, right on cue. They slowed up and stared, puzzled at seeing that the wagon train people were still on stage in the middle of the floor.

And then, outside, sounded the hard bang of a pistol shot.

Everybody's head jerked around to look at the east doors. Somebody cried

out, as if scared. Mr. Bayley started toward those doors to see what was going on. Mrs. Chandler called to him.

"Wait, Mr. Bayley! Don't go outside!"

He hesitated and while he paused, the door opened. Pushed open, from the outside. It was a tall policeman who came in. He looked surprised when he saw so many people staring at him.

"We've got the dog." he said. "Mr. Bayley, it's all right to go outside now."

Later, Mrs. Chandler talked to Andy alone.

"Andy, I just can't thank you enough."

"Why, you're welcome, Mrs. Chandler. But it wasn't much," he said honestly. "I just knew how to use that mike, and I did, that's all."

Next day, Mr. Bayley sent word that he'd like to have the fifth grade put on their pageant for the Wilson Grade School, across town. The class voted to do it.

Mrs. Chandler said then "Children, let's elect a sound engineer to serve for this performance."

"We've already elected Jerry."

"Sure, let Jerry keep on being engineer."

"But," Mrs. Chandler said, "Andy knows so much more about the job! Don't you think he'd make a good engineer?" she asked.

Intergroup relations

Problem-stories about intergroup relations have been used in a variety of classrooms, with no difficulty arising out of their use. Stories have been presented in situations in which the school people involved felt that it was wise to use them; their use was geared to the needs and readiness of the situation.

Such sessions have revealed so many further needs, and have been so heartening in results, that they serve as encouragement for further work with intercultural materials.

The story *No Trespassing* which follows here was used, for example, in two neighboring middle-class communities. One 6th-grade teacher had a program of intergroup education as part of her over-all curriculum. Her pupils solved the problem of *No Trespassing* by trying *to get the club rules changed* so that discrimination on the basis of prejudice could be eliminated.

A neighboring 7th-grade teacher's pupils met an intergroup problem for the first time with the presentation of this story to them. They proposed that the Jewish boy involved escape being excluded because of prejudice *by changing his name*. The teacher in this case was so disturbed by the experience that she reported it to faculty meeting and the teachers of the school decided that the school needed a continuing program in intergroup education.

The following pages present a treatment of the problem-story *No Trespassing*, and the story itself, as an example of one way role-playing a problem-story may be useful in dealing with intergroup relations.

Role-playing an intergroup problem-story

The problem:

The story in this case, *No Trespassing,* typifies a classic problem in human relations: exclusion because of race, creed or nationality.

Syd, a Jewish boy, is discriminated against on the basis of prejudice. The adult in the situation accepts the concept of exclusion and tries to offer a different reward to Syd than is offered to his two friends. In this story children are confronted with the fact that in our society people are sometimes excluded from places because of prejudice. The class is involved in making a choice between (1) accepting discrimination or (2) taking action against it.

Most children show no tendencies to discriminate against others for the usual social reasons until the adult culture influences them by example or pressure. However, by the time children are ten years old, most reflect the social patterns of discrimination of their family and class and community.

In this story, a child is discriminated against on a basis of prejudice. This is an account of anti-Semitism; but it could also represent anti-Negro bias, anti-Italian or anti-Catholic bias, or any anti-foreigner bigotry.

Educators are more and more aware of the importance of good intergroup relations in the development of democratic personalities. Not only was our nation developed through an ideal of equal opportunity for all, but its very future depends upon the attitudes its citizens hold toward the people of the world. Teachers today are deeply concerned with the guiding of children in growth of attitudes of sympathy, appreciation and acceptance of all people, regardless of race, creed or color.

The basic teaching objective of this story and its use to stimulate role-playing is to help children explore the fact that prejudice and discrimination do operate in our culture and to consider rationally the reasons for and the effect of prejudice, within the limits of their maturity.

It is the teacher's role not to condemn but to help children see that all people have some prejudices, to examine the reasons for them and to explore the effect of prejudice upon human beings. The teacher may guide the class toward consideration of such concepts as:

- People often have mistaken notions about other people because they look or speak differently or have strange customs.
- Sometimes we jump to conclusions about all the people of a group because one of that group does something that offends us.
- All people have the same feelings and needs.

It is difficult to discuss this story in terms of "typical" classroom responses because children's attitudes vary with that of the community they live in and their family backgrounds. Some children accept the situation in this story; but, because they like the hero, Syd, they try to figure out a way of making an exception of him. Other children are indignant at the discrimination and try to get the rules changed. Some children are completely innocent of prejudice, and for them this story presents an entirely new learning situation.

Even though some children have had no experience with racial or religious discrimination, they are quick to understand the concept of discrimination when it is described in terms of their own environment – the girl who invites some girls to a party and excludes others, the boy who is left out of social plans because of his ragged appearance, etc.

No Trespassing involves such a controversial problem of our American scene that it is not possible to make simple and positive suggestions for treating it. You will have to estimate the meaning this story has for your pupils and your community. If you teach in an eastern city which has a large Jewish population, this problem may be a real and bitter one for some of your children. In some communities in the Middle West there may be no incidents of anti-Semitism in the experience of your pupils.

One of your difficulties will be not to embarrass a Jewish child in your class, not to isolate him through this role-playing session. If there are only one or two such children in your group, it may be wise to change the nationality or religion of Syd in order to impersonalize the issue. However, if there are a sizable number of Jewish children in your class, they may already have a problem, and a sympathetic, honest approach through this story may help them to accept themselves, and may help the rest of the group to consider the consequences of discrimination.

Important to your success with this story is the task of setting the problem so that children can see that people discriminate against others for various reasons, none of which is entirely rational.

Introducing the problem:

A good way to introduce this story would be to recall to the class some example of discrimination that is common to their experience. Then the teacher may go on to say, "I have a story about a boy who was left out of a wonderful vacation for reasons that had nothing to do with him personally. I wonder what you might have done if this happened to you? When this story stops, perhaps you can finish it."

The teacher should read the story carefully beforehand, and should make notes on problem relations which might be explored through role-playing. For example, in this story, the teacher may wish to guide the children to:

- Finish the story in action. This may take the form of:
  a. Getting the rule against Jewish boys changed.
  b. Exploring why the rule was made and by whom.
  c. Deciding not to go to the camp but to accept the bicycles instead.
  d. Getting an exception to the rule for Syd.
  e. Other solutions.

The consequences of each solution should be explored – how each person feels about the matter; how it affects his life.

- Switch roles, if appropriate, so that a child who is expressing prejudice may be placed in Syd's role.
- Consider the general problem of prejudice and open up the need for further information and study.

- Follow up the story with intercultural materials – films, books, recordings, etc.

Exploring the personal experiences of your class

If a warm and sympathetic climate for support of minority groups develops in the class, it may be possible for the teacher to ask, "Did anything like this ever happen to you?" It may be wise, however, to begin on a less personal level with "Do you know of a situation where someone was treated like Syd?"

As the children share experiences the teacher can guide their thinking by asking:

- How was the problem resolved?
- How did the people involved feel about it?
- How do you think the problem should have been solved?

It may be profitable to ask various members of the class how they would have acted had they been in the situation described.

NO TRESPASSING*
(Condensed version)

Syd, Eddie and Joe – eleven-year-olds – were hiking across the countryside when they came to a fence bearing this sign:

PRIVATE PROPERTY
Summer Camp
GRAY HAWK MILITARY SCHOOL
Trespassers will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

It did not stop the boys. They crawled under the wire and went exploring, and were much impressed by the activity they saw.

Boys in natty uniforms.

Boys doing stunts on horseback.

Boys playing tennis, handball, baseball.

Boys in motorboats on the lake, water-skiing.

Syd was frankly envious. Eddie was impressed but silent. Joe sneered, belittling the "fancypants kids" whose "pops had money to spend" sending them to such an expensive summer camp.

Eddie led on. They stole like Indians on the warpath through the shrubbery and across the spacious grounds, watching the fun the uniformed boys were having, and growing ever more envious.

A runaway horse plunging through the brush almost trampled on them. They stopped the animal, and noticed that it was saddled and that a rein was broken. Obviously, the horse had thrown a rider.

* By George Shaftel.

Backtracking, they found a uniformed boy lying senseless on the ground, a leg broken and a bleeding wound in his head where he had struck a rock. It was getting dark, now, and they realized that the boy might lie here all night, losing blood, if they left him.

They made a litter and started carrying him. It seemed as if he grew heavier with every step, but they managed to get him out to the road. And then a police car stopped and shone a light on them as they climbed under the fence and a tough voice demanded to know if they could read the "No Trespassing" signs.

Syd and Joe fled. Eddie stayed by the senseless boy.

The police car rushed Eddie and the hurt boy into town. . . .

It was next evening that Eddie's father answered the doorbell after supper, and saw a big, grayhaired man waiting there.

"My name's Nichols. I'm looking for Eddie Malloy."

"He's here. Come in, won't you? I'm Eddie's father."

Eddie, doing his homework beside the radio in the livingroom, became afraid. They were looking for him!

"What did you want to see Eddie about?" his father asked.

"Why, last night, the police picked up a boy named Eddie Malloy. They saw him coming from the grounds of the Gray Hawk Military Academy. He had another boy with him who was hurt, and the police took the injured lad to the hospital. While they were carrying him inside, Eddie ran away."

And now they've come after me, Eddie realized. In his mind was that sign on the Gray Hawk fence: *Trespassers will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law*. Eddie began to shake.

"The policemen knew his name," the man went on, "because they had questioned him while driving to the hospital. He told them two other boys had been on the school grounds with him. I'm looking for them, too. Your boy wouldn't give their names to the policemen."

"Oh, he wouldn't?" Eddie's Dad said. He didn't sound angry, exactly, more like he was proud, or something.

"I want to find all three of them," Mr. Nichols went on. And *his* voice had an odd, shaky unevenness in it. "You see, my boy Philip is a student at Gray Hawk. He – my wife died five years ago. Philip likes horses. He's a great little rider. Well, yesterday, he says, he was riding this new horse, Chappo, down through the brush, and a quail flying up suddenly scared Chappo into bucking, and a rein broke, and Phil got thrown. He doesn't remember much after that, but the doctor says the horse must have kicked him in the head."

"Good Lord!" Eddie's Dad said. "That's awful."

"Yes, I – " Mr. Nichols coughed kind of hard, and didn't finish.

"How is the boy?"

"Why, he's doing very well, really. I – we're lucky, no getting around it. The doctor thought at first it might be a fracture, but now he's decided it's just concussion. But, Mr. Malloy, if Philip hadn't been found, he'd have lain out there all night and likely – well, if your son and his friends hadn't carried him out to the highway, he'd be dead now."

"Oh, now, I don't think –"

"That's exactly what the doctor says." Mr. Nichols' voice was getting kind of loud. He shut up abruptly, as if realizing it. "My boy means an awful lot to me –."

"Of course."

"I – I'm not really a wealthy man, Mr. Malloy. I keep Philip in Gray Hawk because he has such a swell time there, and I can afford it. Now, I can't just say thanks to your son and his two friends. I want to show just a little bit of how I feel toward them. I'd like to *do* something for them."

"Oh, that's not necessary at all, Mr. Nichols!"

"Yes, it is, sir. For me. Now, I had this idea. Tell me what you think of it. It's summer time, it's vacation time – and your lad and his two chums were trespassing on the Gray Hawk summer camp. I don't blame 'em for that. It's a wonderful place. What I'd like to do, sir – I'd like for Eddie and his two friends to become members of Gray Hawk for two weeks. To spend two weeks up there as my guests, swimming and riding and having all that fun. What do you think of that idea, Mr. Malloy?"

Eddie's Dad's voice was soft as he said, "Mr. Nichols, I think those boys would love it. But suppose we ask them?" And Mr. Malloy called, "Oh, Eddie! Come here!"

Eddie came in. And one look at his excited face told his Dad and Mr. Nichols that he had overheard.

"You'd like to go, wouldn't you, Eddie?" his Dad said .

"I would, Dad, I sure would!"

"How about Joe and Syd?"

"Can I go call 'em, Pop?"

Mr. Malloy nodded, and Eddie shot out of the house. Syd lived next door, and Joe lived across the street. A few minutes later Eddie was back, bringing Joe and Syd.

Mr. Nichols smiled at them.

"It's true, boys. Would you all like to spend two weeks at the Gray Hawk Camp?"

"Gosh, yes!" Joe almost yelled; and Syd said breathlessly, "Yes, sir!"

"All right, then, it's settled! I'll telephone Major Arnott in the morning, and at two o'clock tomorrow afternoon I'll come for you, and I'll take you there. I'll have to give Arnott your names and addresses." He took a pencil from his pocket, and opened his wallet to write in it. "Eddie Malloy. . . .

"Joe Harris . . . and Syd – Is that Sydney?"

"Yes sir, Sydney Goldberg."

"Sydney Gold – oh. G-o-l-d-b-e-r-g?"

"Yes, sir!"

Very slowly, Mr. Nichols wrote the name out, letter by letter. His face had got very red, and his forehead was sweaty, as if the room had suddenly become very hot. After finishing Syd's name, he stared at the paper, frowning, as if trying hard to see something that had become very dim.

"I'll call Major Arnott first thing in the morning," he repeated, almost as if talking to himself. He glanced at Mr. Malloy suddenly, an odd, baffled, worried look in his eyes, almost as if he were asking Mr. Malloy for help. But Mr. Malloy didn't say anything, though he, too, was looking strange now. His lips had shut tight and his eyes had a bright, steady glint as if he were suddenly angry, but wasn't going to let the faintest hint of it escape from him.

"Look, Sydney," Mr. Nichols said. "Have you – have you got a bicycle?"

"Why, no, I haven't, Mr. Nichols," Syd said.

Mr. Nichols seemed suddenly to cheer up.

"Sydney, what do you think of this idea: I'm going to get you a brand new Columbia bicycle! You know, one of those fancy models with a klaxon and an electric light and a three speed shift and – would you like that, Sydney?"

Sydney looked puzzled.

"Are you going to give Joe and Eddie a bike, too?"

"Oh, no!" Mr. Nichols was very bluff and hearty now. "Instead of a bike, I'll take them up to the Gray Hawk camp. You'll be luckier than they are! After the two weeks are over you'll still have a bike, while they –"

"But you said *all* of us were to go to camp," Eddie reminded him; and at the same time Joe was saying, "Syd'd rather go to camp, I know he would!"

Mr. Nichols wiped his face with his handkerchief, and looked miserable.

"Boys, I – Mr. Malloy! Won't you –."

Eddie's Dad said briefly, "Tell them yourself."

"Well, you see – believe me, boys, I don't like this, but the Gray Hawk school is a very special kind of place. Believe me, I've had nothing to do with making the rules –."

"Tell them," Mr. Malloy repeated.

"The Gray Hawk summer camp won't take Jewish boys."

Eddie and Joe did not understand at first; they stared at Mr. Nichols. But Syd said, "Oh." And Syd got a white, sick look on his face.

"But why not?" Eddie demanded. And then Eddie said, "Wait, Syd!" for Syd had turned and was walking out of the room. Eddie started after him.

Mr. Nichols said, "Boys, Gray Hawk won't take Negro boys, either, or Chinese, or – but listen, just because one of you can't go to camp, that's no reason for the other two fellows to lose out, is it? I'm sure Sydney wouldn't want you to miss a fine vacation just because he can't go. Wait, Eddie! Let's talk this over!"

Sensitivity training

Many expressions common in our language reveal bias in our culture:

"That's real white of you."

"Don't be an Indian-giver!"

"I jewed him down."

"So that's the nigger-in-the-woodpile!"

"He's too Scotch."

"Nobody here but us chickens."

"White man speaks with forked tongue."

"Real clever, these Chinese."

Such sayings reveal a set, a stereotype of belittlement for particular minority groups. These expressions are used quite commonly, and often with no intent to hurt the feelings of anyone within hearing. Nevertheless, these expressions do imply a contempt for the minority group referred to, and they *do* hurt.

Young people who are alertly sensitive to the feelings of others will not use such expressions. Children can be helped to become aware that using such stereotypes, even without the intent of offending anyone, does hurt other people's feelings and contributes to a sense of being separate and inferior and rejected.

Role-playing stories involving the use of these "hurt words" can help to build this kind of sensitivity to other people's feelings.

The problem:

Two stories follow: *But Names Will Never Hurt Me?* and *Eeny-Meeny-Miney-Mo.* The first deals with direct namecalling; the second with the use of "hurt words" in expressions that are not deliberately used with intent to hurt anyone's feelings.

The teacher of a class that contains a large number of minority group children (Negro, Mexican, Indian, etc.) may find that there is considerable contention in the class, with namecalling. When using one of these stories, there will be occasions when it will be appropriate to make the application indirect: change the minority group referred to. This may be especially necessary if only one or two children of that group are in the class. If the minority group children in the class are Negro, change the minority referred to in the story to Mexican, or Puerto Rican. The reason for this tactful measure is to avoid putting children so directly on the spot. However, in these times of struggle for civil rights, children of some minority groups are especially mobilized to confront the issues. Majority children very much need the experience of "feeling with" children who know discrimination. Honest but sensitively guided confrontation is a necessity of our time.

A problem should be considered at this point: Will the point of the story come home to the whole class? Will a "transfer" of meaning occur? Some children, of course, will immediately see the application of the principle and will come at once to a generalization: they will understand that using labels that belittle another group of people always hurts. Other children will fail to make this transfer; they will see only the specific example shown: that to use the expression "jew him down" offends a Jewish child.

Introducing the problem:

It is part of the teacher's role to provide a series of experiences that give the class a variety of applications of the general rule so that the children will, on their own, achieve the "Aha!" experience of suddenly seeing the general appli-

cation of the various instances they have dealt with. The generalization will come home to them without being presented by the teacher.

The teacher can help the class to arrive at the generalization and insight by asking such questions as the following:

"Can you think of other 'hurt words' that might offend children you know?"

"What kinds of names make you mad?"

"Why do you suppose some people use such words?"

"How do you suppose people feel when they are called names or overhear namecalling talk?"

"Have you ever been called such names? Or overheard expressions like 'He's too Scotch' that could refer to you? What started it? How did you feel? What happened? What did you do?"

Some groups may be quite unfamiliar with such language. In other groups, listing offensive words may often cause tittering and embarrassment. The teacher should recognize this embarrassment and accept it without censure, and lead the group on to serious discussion.

When discussing *But Names Will Never Hurt Me?* the teacher may ask, "Why do you think these little girls were calling each other such names?"

The group may or may not have a realistic appreciation of what often lies behind such behavior. They may say, "They don't like each other."

The individual's estimate of himself – his self-image – is in large part a reflection of the way people around him feel about him and respond to him. Minority group individuals are prone to have a self-estimate that reflects the opinions of them held by the dominant group. As a result, Negro and Puerto Rican and other minority group youngsters, when angry with one another, will use the insulting labels they have heard applied to them by members of the majority group. Such names, of course, reflect their conditioned dislike of being minority group members, their own self-hate.

BUT NAMES WILL NEVER HURT ME? *

Lorna had just left the apartment and was walking into the playground behind the housing project when she saw her sister, Ellie. *Heard* her, too. Ellie was crying. Loudly.

Lorna hurried toward her and brushed Ellie's matted blond hair out of her eyes and put her arm about Ellie's shoulders.

"What happened?" Lorna demanded. "Why're you crying?"

Ellie was a third-grader, eight years old. Lorna, who was eleven and big for her age, was a sixth-grader.

"They slapped me!" Ellie wailed. "They t-tore my dress!"

"Who did? Show me!"

Ellie turned, and led Lorna toward a group of three small colored girls playing hopscotch in a corner of the playground. They looked up, and grew silent,

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their eyes big, as they saw Ellie approaching with her angry big sister.

"They did it!" Ellie shrilled. "They hit me and kicked me and tore my dress!"

They stood stiff and silent as Lorna's outraged glance swept their faces.

"Three of you," she said scornfully, "ganging up on one kid! I ought to slap your faces. Maybe I will."

"She called us names," one child said.

"Yeah," another said. "She called me a monkey. A black monkey."

Lorna caught a sharp breath. She looked at Ellie.

"*Did* you?"

Ellie nodded, her eyes filling with tears.

"B-but they were doing it too! I just said what they were saying. Lucille called Betty a – what they said."

Lorna looked at the three girls.

"Is that true?"

They nodded.

Lucille burst out, "But *she* can't call us that"

Lorna turned.

"Come on, Ellie."

Ellie stood stubbornly in her tracks, her small face ugly with anger.

"Ain't you going to hit them back?" she demanded. "Go on – hit them!"

EENY-MEENY-MINEY-MO *

Martha asked, "You kids ever play Duck-on-a-Rock?"

"No."

"What's that?"

"Let's play, let's play!"

"Hold on. You can't play a game until you know what it is. Listen."

The faces of the third-graders were respectful and eager. Martha, a big seventh-grader, felt very grown-up and important. This was a new kind of arrangement being tried by the city schools – using some responsible seventh-graders to help with primary grade children. The six- and seven-year-olds were delighted to have the big eleven- and twelve-year-olds thinking up games for them, playing with them, helping with their lessons.

Martha explained. "You take four of these wooden blocks and pile them up straight, like this," she said, building a straight column. She did not explain that when boys played Duck-on-a-Rock on a vacant lot or in a back alley, they did not use wooden blocks but half-bricks. "Then, everybody stands back here, back of a line, and takes turns throwing a block at the pile. When the pile is hit and knocked down, everybody runs and hides – except the kid who is *It*. He has to run to the blocks and stack them up straight again – and count to thirty. Then he starts hunting the others. Everybody who can run past him and touch the pile without his tagging them is free. But if he tags someone, that person is

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It for the next game."

"That'll be fun!"

"Who's It?"

"John's It!"

"No, Lena's It!"

"No," Martha said. "We'll draw lots."

"Too many," Lucy said. "I know! Everybody stand in a circle. We'll find out who's It." And as the kids grouped around her, she started chanting, "Eeny, meeny, miney, mo—" and as she spoke each word, she pointed to a different child, moving around the circle, "catch a nigger by the toe – If he hollers, let him *go!* – You're It, Sammy!"

But then something happened.

Toby Jones smacked Lucy's face.

For a startled moment, the group stood frozen in shock. Then Lucy burst out crying, and a chorus of angry words exploded from the rest.

"You crazy? Why'd you do that?"

"Why'd he hit her?"

"You can't play with us!"

"Martha, don't let him play with us!"

Toby had turned away from the group. He was leaving, his dark face set and defiant.

"Wait, Toby!" Martha called.

"Oh, let him go, Martha!"

"But why did he slap her?"

"We don't want him around."

"Wait," Martha called. "Toby, don't go!"

"What got into him?"

"Hitting a girl!"

Dora, the other Negro child in the group, had run after Toby and put her arm around his shoulder and was going off with him.

"Why did he hit me?" Lucy was wailing.

Martha said, "Wait here," to the group, and started to go after Toby and Dora.

The other children said, "Oh, let him go!"

"We don't care – we can play without him."

Martha said:

SECOND PRIZE *

The problem:

The issue is discrimination on the basis of color, creed or nationality; this story deals with a subtle aspect of segregation. (It is, incidentally, based upon an actual incident reported in the press.)

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Introducing the problem:

You may say to the group, "All of you know what a great effort is being made today to rid ourselves of bias against people who are of different color than we are. This is a story dealing with the problem of prejudice. The story stops but is not finished. As I read, think of ways in which the story might be finished."

Edith, Tom, and Lucia were puzzled and a little worried as they walked down the hall toward the principal's office. Edith was president of the sixth-grade class, Tom was secretary, and Lucia was treasurer.

"Why did Mr. Watson send for us?" Tom asked.

"You worry too much," Edith said. "Nobody's busted a window."

And Lucia said, "It doesn't have to be something *bad*."

"Mr. Watson doesn't call us in unless it's for something important."

As the students entered the office, Mr. Watson looked up from his desk and smiled at them. They relaxed; the principal was obviously pleased about something.

"Hello. Thanks for coming down so promptly. I've got an important job for you."

"What is that, sir?" Tom asked.

"I want you three to act as a special committee. I want you to select the boy or girl whom you believe to be the Best School Citizen of the Year.

"I'll explain. You remember, last month, when five-year-old Pete Doyle was lost in the park along Deer Creek? All you sixth-grade boys helped search for him. It got freezing cold that night, and if you boys hadn't found Pete he'd have probably died. His grandfather wants to show his appreciation by doing something for the sixth grade. I suggested that we could use a record player. He said sure, he'd give the school a good one. But he'd also like to give something nice to just one student. Something that would be his or hers to keep, and yet would give recognition to the school too. We decided to make it an award to the Best School Citizen of the Year."

"That's a good idea."

"What is the award, sir?"

"I can't tell you that; it's to be a big surprise. We're having Field Day on Friday, and Mr. Doyle will bring the present here and will give it to the winner himself. I'll tell you this much, though: it's a pretty wonderful surprise. It's something that'll be enjoyed for years, and will make the winner mighty happy."

"Sir, can't you tell just the committee?"

"We'll be staying up nights, trying to guess –"

"Mr. Doyle wants it to be a surprise," the principal repeated firmly. "He says he wants to see everybody's eyes pop out when he unloads it. Well, I'll leave you now. You three are now in session as the selection committee. Pull your chairs up to the table and start balloting."

"It's not going to be easy, sir," Tom said.

Mr. Watson walked out. The students leaned their elbows on the table and frowned in concentration.

"Best School Citizen of the Year," Tom echoed. "Say, how about *you,* Edith?"

"Sure," Lucia said. "You got elected class president. You're our top citizen."

"I'm out. So're you two. We're the nominating committee."

"How about Sam Baker, then?" Lucia asked. "He ran the paper drive for his room last month, and they brought in the most paper."

"But that paper drive," Edith objected, "wasn't nearly as important as the milk drive!"

"That's right," Tom agreed, "Sending milk to refugee camps in Asia is more important."

"You think maybe it's a television set?" Edith asked.

"What is?"

"The prize, the prize!"

"Will you quit crying about the prize," Tom snapped, "and get to work?"

"But, gosh, Mr. Watson said it's something you'd enjoy for years —"

"How about Toby Anderson?" Lucia suggested. "Everybody likes him."

"But what's he ever *done?*" Tom demanded. "This isn't a contest for who's *liked* the most."

"Toby's good at baseball."

"So's Joey Stevens and Ralph Nix."

"Say, how about Joey Stevens?" Edith said excitedly.

"That's right."

"But what's Joey ever done?" Lucia asked.

"Well," Tom started to explain, "that day there was a fire on his block —"

"You missed it, Lucia," Edith put in, "you were absent that week."

"So what happened?"

"It was after school," Tom began, "and Joey was home . . ."

Joey saw the two small boys turn from the sidewalk into the weed-grown lot next door. At the time, it did not worry him. Kids had used that lot for a playground until the city had built a real playground a block away that had swings and slides and traveling rings and a baseball diamond and a director who provided bats and balls and kept the big boys from bullying the little boys too much. Now the lot was usually deserted. A crop of weeds had grown over it. In the spring the weeds were pleasantly green but now, after a hot summer, they were dead and dry.

People who lived in the shabby tenement flats on each side of the lot often dumped rubbish in it: baby carriages too worn out to use even for carrying junk; mattresses with rips that oozed stuffing; broken chairs, boxes, bottles, excelsior, trunks, and so on. An old wagon and a truck without wheels rested in peace at the back of the lot. Occasionally a hackie living next door would run his old cab over the curb onto the lot and wash the car or leave it there overnight.

Joey, sitting at the front window of his mother's flat, was busy doing his arithmetic homework. After looking up as the two small boys turned into the lot, he bent over his book and paper again.

He smelled smoke a minute or two before actually realizing what it was.

Then he heard a crackling noise like strings of firecrackers popping. Faintly against that noise he heard a kid yelling.

Abruptly he jumped up, remembering. Those two small boys who had walked onto the lot –

He ran out the front door and around the corner of the house onto the lot – and saw the fire.

Tall weeds at the back of the lot were tonguing flames a dozen feet into the air.

"Those kids! I bet they started it."

But where were they? He could not see them. He heard them, however. One was crying, the other yelling. Through his mind streaked an explanation of what had probably happened. They had brought matches from their mother's kitchen. Maybe a couple of wieners, too. They had come out here to play at camping; maybe planning to put wieners on the ends of sticks to roast them. But, of course, the fire had got away from them. Once started in these dry weeds, it would spread like an explosion.

Where were they?

He saw them, as a gust of wind bent the smoke flat. They were on the other side of the fire, against the wall of the sheds behind them. Trapped. And scared into senseless panic.

Joey didn't stop to think. He ran. He started through the smoke over ground burned black, through the curtain of fire where it was thinnest.

Reaching the two kids, he lifted one six-year-old – hoisted him up onto the roof of the low shed.

"Run!"

Bending, he grabbed up the second boy. This youngster was heavier but Joey somehow boosted up the boy onto the roof of the shed.

Smoke swirled around Joey's face; smoke was a scorching torment in his throat, and he choked. Reaching up, he caught the edge of the roof. Heat struck his back like a slashing whip. He tried to climb, but his muscles lacked strength. A small hand grabbed his wrist. The fool kid was trying to help him! "Run!" Joey gasped. "These sheds'll burn too"

Joey rested a half-second, and made another hard try – and got his elbows over the roof edge. Heat licked at the backs of his legs, and drove him into frantic effort. He swung a knee up, got it onto the roof, and rolled over into safety on the roof top.

Both small boys were there, staring at him with big eyes.

"Come on!" he yelled angrily at them.

They climbed down the far side of the shed, ran through the hallway of the tenement in front to the far side of the block.

"Go on home," Joey told the two kids, and ran home himself.

The backs of his shoes and jeans were scorched black. As he took them off, he heard the siren of a fire engine. He didn't run out to watch, but stayed in the bedroom, hiding. His legs were red and the skin blistered, and the blisters were beginning to hurt so much that he had to choke back whimpers of pain.

When his mother got home from work an hour later, she took one look, and

said, "Come on, Joey! You can tell me what happened on the way." By cab she took him to a hospital dispensary three blocks away . . .

All that had happened over a month before; and the voices of the committee members were grave with respect as they discussed the incident.

"That was a pretty brave thing Joey did," Tom said.

"Sure was," Lucia agreed.

"I think," Tom decided, "that we ought to pick Joey for Best School Citizen of the Year."

"I agree."

"I vote for Joey too!"

Field Day came on a Friday. The whole school, from kindergarten through sixth grade, took part, singing on the school lawn and doing folk dances to music from a loudspeaker. Parents and friends looked on.

The last event of the afternoon was the presentation, by the principal, of the surprise award. Mr. Watson was smiling as he picked up the microphone at the stand and faced the crowd of children and parents. Everybody became quiet.

"And now, friends," Mr. Watson said, "I'm going to make the presentation of the award for our Best School Citizen of the Year. First now, I'm going to let you see the prize, which has been kept a secret. Then I'll name the winner." He looked around, toward the corner of the building, and shouted, "All right, Mr. Doyle! Bring it on!"

A car came down the school driveway, from around the corner of the school, towing a trailer. The rig stopped opposite the crowd. Mr. Doyle himself got out of the car, walked around to the rear of the trailer, opened its door, and carefully eased a pony out of it onto the ground.

Sight of that pony made a gasp go up from the crowd. Someone started clapping, and everybody applauded and whistled.

"What a beautiful pinto pony!" someone said, near Tom. And that was what Tom – and practically everyone in the crowd – was thinking. The pinto pranced as Mr. Doyle led him around in front of the children. The pony wore bridle and saddle made of fine hand-tooled leather and studded with silver conchas that glistened in the sun.

Mr Doyle led the pony to the stand.

"Here he is, Mr. Watson. Whom does he belong to?"

Into the microphone, so that everyone would hear clearly, the principal said: "The youngster who has been chosen to receive this award as our Best School Citizen of the Year is – *Joey Stevens!*"

The crowd applauded heartily, some of the young people whooped until others shushed them. It was a popular choice.

Mr. Watson called: "Joey! Where are you? Step up here, son."

"I'm coming, Mr. Watson."

People made way for him, as he hurried forward; as he passed, friends patted

him on the back and said, "Hurry, boy!" and "Nice going, Joey," and "Are you ever lucky!"

Mr. Watson shook hands with him, and held out the reins.

"Here, take the reins, boy. He's all yours, Joey! Climb aboard and ride 'im!"

Joey swung into the saddle in a way that showed he knew something about horses. The pinto stepped out lightly into a trot. Joey rode back and forth before the crowd, beaming with delight as everyone applauded. . . . Only Mr. Doyle stood dour and silent beside the principal, biting his lip as he stared.

"Mr. Watson," he said, his voice low but sharp, "I want to have a talk with you!"

On Monday morning Tom and Edith and Lucia were called to the principal's office again.

They found Mr. Watson looking very solemn and upset.

Tom said, "Good morning, sir. You sent for us?"

The principal nodded. "I'm sorry to have to tell the committee that Mr. Doyle isn't pleased with the way we awarded the prize for our Best School Citizen."

"Why not?" Tom asked. "It was a unanimous choice. We all three agreed on Joey Stevens."

"Mr. Doyle says he didn't know we had Negro children in our school. He says that he never intended for the pony to be given to a Negro boy."

"It wasn't given," Tom said angrily. "Joey won the pony – by being our best citizen!"

"I know." The principal sighed. "Mr. Doyle says Joey can keep the pony. Joey is our best colored citizen. However, Mr. Doyle says he has another pony just as fine as this one; a pinto, too. Mr. Doyle wants us to pick a *white* boy or girl who's our best school citizen, and give him or her this second pony."

The students just looked at Mr. Watson for a moment.

"That's odd–" Edith said.

But Tom demanded, "What did *you* say, sir?"

"I told Mr. Doyle that I'd leave it up to this committee. Shall we accept this second pony and choose another Best School Citizen?"

"But we've already picked him – it's Joey!" Tom insisted.

"But, Tom," Lucia said impulsively, "What's the harm of having another pony to give away? It's just extra good luck. Let's choose another lucky winner!"

"No," Tom said. "We've made our choice – and it's a good choice, and I'm sticking with it!"

"But I don't see the harm –" Lucia insisted.

Mr. Watson looked from Tom's face, to Lucia, and turned to Edith.

"Well, Lucia votes yes, and Tom votes no on choosing another Best Citizen. Edith, your vote will make a decisive two to one. How do you vote? *Yes,* or *no?*"

Usually Edith was quick to make up her mind; but a long, breath-held moment passed before she came to her decision.

She said:

JOSEFINA *

The problem:

The issue is that of discrimination on the basis of color, creed or nationality. Josefina is Spanish-American. Her great-grandparents moved to Southern California long ago; her mother and father still speak Spanish in the home. In this story she meets a nice boy whose family has just moved to town from an eastern city. Josefina likes Ted, but he is an Anglo. When he asks her for a date, she is very troubled. If she goes out on a date with him, she foresees that the Anglo young people will snub him – and her Spanish-speaking friends will snub her. This story is for junior high or high school level.

Introducing the problem:

Say to the group. "Dating is a many-sided problem for most of us. Not only parents, but your friends, too, influence you in your choices of whom you'll ask to parties or whom you'll agree to go with. This story deals with one aspect of the matter. As I read, think of ways in which you might solve the problem of the story."

The big white rabbit hopped around the corner of the house onto the front lawn. He wasn't supposed to be there; he belonged in a hutch in the backyard. Josie Ruiz, seeing him from her bedroom window, sighed and realized that she'd have to go down and shoo the dumb brute back where he belonged. At dinner she'd tell her kid brother that he'd better put a lock on his hutches or he'd lose some of his pets. Josie pulled on a sweater and started brushing her hair.

Meanwhile, the rabbit hopped a little farther across the yard. He was a huge New Zealand buck with ears that looked big enough to catch baseballs in, a nose that wiggled constantly, hind feet that weren't really as big as snowshoes but were enormous, just the same, and a wide powder-puff of a tail. He sat down on that puff and looked around, his big ears swiveling to sample the breeze, like twin radar antennae. He heard nothing alarming, but he did see and smell a plot of pansies which Josie's mother had put out the day before, and he galumphed over to the bed and started putting down a square meal.

Josie saw, and thought, "Oh, gosh, mother'll have a fit!"

She delayed a moment, to finish brushing her hair – and then she heard the dog: the shrill, excited ki-yi-ing of a small dog that was chasing something. She glanced out of the window again and saw a small black and white dog starting across the street toward the rabbit.

"For goodness' sake!"

She slammed her brush down on the bureau and ran out of her room.

As she came out the front door, she heard somebody yell, "Spot! Spot! Come here!" She saw the big rabbit lift his head and look at the dog. She saw the dog, running across the lawn now – and a young fellow chasing after the dog.

She darted at the dog, crying "Git!"

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The dog sat back on its haunches. The young man sprang at him and caught him. Holding on to the pooch, the young fellow looked at Josie.

"Hey, you oughtn't to let your rabbit run loose like that," he scolded. "Golly, I'd hate to have Spot kill it."

That little pooch kill Gargantua? Josie almost laughed out loud. The dog was a small terrier. Oh, he was probably full of fight, all right, and Gargantua was only a rabbit, but –

"You know, they use packs of terriers like this to hunt bears," the young fellow was saying. He smiled at Josie. "It's sure lucky I saw Spot start to cross the street."

Lucky for Spot! Josie thought. Oh, sure, Gargantua was just a big, fluffy-looking rabbit, but what he would have done to Spot would have been just plain murder, that's all. With those big hind feet, Gargantua could kick like a pile-driver – and those feet were armed with claws like sickles. Spot would have thought he had tangled with a combination tiger-and-mule that was kicking him to pieces and tearing him apart at the same time. Spot *was* lucky that he was still in one spot and not scattered all over the yard like confetti.

But Josie didn't say this to the young fellow; he was too nice. He was about her own age, fifteen or sixteen, and he had blue eyes and wavy brown hair and he really was good-looking. And the way he smiled at her showed that he liked what he saw, too.

So Josie just said, "Thanks." And then she didn't know what to say; she was shy with new people, especially with Anglos.

"I'll help you catch the rabbit," he said.

They herded Gargantua into the back yard – and he hopped up into his own hutch by himself, so that all they had to do was shut the door. Spot whined at sight of all the white rabbits, but the young fellow held the dog in his arms.

"My name's Ted Anderson," he said. "We moved in across the street just last week. I've seen you on the high school bus."

"I'm Josie Ruiz," she said. "We've always lived here."

"I'm a junior at high."

"I'm a soph."

"What's Liston High School like?"

She almost said, "Oh, I hate it!" but checked herself.

"Oh, it's all right, I guess – if you have friends."

"I've made a good start," he said, smiling. "Well, got to get home and practice. See you on the bus tomorrow, Josie."

Next morning, Josie put on a new plaid skirt and her favorite sweater, and tied a new nylon scarf about her dark hair.

When she came down to breakfast, her kid brother, Ramon, stared at her and said, "'Gosh, Sis, you look neat!"

Josie flushed with pleasure. Ramon was usually far more apt to say, "Hey, what rock did you crawl out from under?" than to give compliments.

As she waited on the corner for the school bus, Ted Anderson walked up, carrying a musical instrument case. He smiled and said, "Hi." He wore tan

slacks and a gray shirt, and he was just about the best-looking boy she had ever known, she realized.

There were plenty of vacant seats on the bus, but Ted sat down next to her.

"Got to finish a theme," he said. "I have band practice, first period, so I can't do it then."

He opened his instrument case. She saw the trumpet inside – and several books and some papers. He took paper out and started writing. In spite of the swaying of the bus, his handwriting was swift and readable. Even while he worked, he looked up often to say something and smile at her.

"I'm writing a theme on the role of Spanish people in bringing civilization to our Southwest," he explained. "I never knew how important a part they played! In fact, back in the little town in Illinois I come from, I never knew any Spanish-speaking people at all. Moving here is a big thrill for me. I've been doing a lot of reading and making discoveries. The Spanish people were great Indian fighters. They were the first farmers and cattle-raisers and miners in our West. Why, our '49'ers learned how to mine gold from the Spanish miners who came up from Mexico! I bet you are proud of your people's history."

Proud? Josie thought a moment. Proud of their past, yes; of their present history, no.

Each time the bus stopped, other young people came aboard. Most were Anglos; some were Spanish-American. Many nodded hello to Josie. In grade school she had been close friends with many of the Anglo girls; but when they had moved up into high school, something had happened that cooled the friendship, that put a distance between her and the girls she had played with so often. At the same time – perhaps because of it – she had become closer to the young people of the same Spanish-speaking background as her own.

"Can you dance the Jarabe?" Ted asked her.

"Yes. I can dance other styles, too," she said.

He laughed. People across the aisle looked at them. Josie knew what they were thinking. The Anglo girls were wondering how she rated this good-looking new boy. The Spanish-speaking girls were wondering if she was busy social climbing.

They were clannish, the Spanish-speaking kids; they stuck together. There had been a time, not so long ago, when they even wore a kind of uniform to proclaim that they were separate and different – the girls wore long hair and short skirts and the boys wore jeans and heavy boots and leather jackets and duck-tailed hair-dos. Most of that was forgotten; but they were as clannish as ever. Very rarely did one of them go on a date with an Anglo boy or girl.

If you did, the other Spanish-speaking students decided that you thought you were too good for them. They stayed away from you, then; among themselves, they said sarcastic things about you. You were an outcast from your own group. Josie had seen this happen several times.

And the Anglo group did not take you in. In fact, the Anglo kid who became chummy with a Spanish-speaking youngster would soon discover that he wasn't being invited to Anglo parties any more. . . .

Ted finished writing his theme as the bus drew up in front of the high school.

"I'll walk you to your class," he said, as they rose to leave the bus. "Say, isn't there a rally at noon today?"

"Yes," Josie said.

"Let's sit together, okay?"

"Why . . . yes," she said.

"Fine!" he said. And when they reached her classroom, he said, "I'll meet you here, Josie!" and hurried off toward the gym.

But as Josie sat down, her mind was very troubled. She had made a mistake, she told herself; she should not have made this date with Ted.

All morning she brooded over the matter. At noon, coming out of her English class, she realized she had to make a decision. She could wait here for Ted. Or she could avoid him by hurrying to the cafeteria to eat her lunch. Which should she do?

Part V

INVOLVEMENT

The newspapers say that our nation is suffering from an "epidemic of non-involvement." By this is meant that, on occasion after occasion, bystanders have failed to offer help to individuals in trouble.

We do, of course, help our children when they need aid. We help relatives. We help friends. We help where we feel a strong duty or obligation.

But do we help strangers?

The press has recently reported a series of incidents in which people have been non-good-Samaritan in their behavior. In New York City, a young woman was repeatedly stabbed while thirty-eight neighbors heard her outcries over a half-hour period. No one ventured from his apartment to help her; no one called police; unaided, she died. In another case, a crowd watched, without interfering, as a gang of eight men tromped two men. In another case, a student who had been stabbed by a member of a gang of toughs asked watching motorists to take him to a hospital – but they rolled up their windows and drove away. In California, motorists saw a taxi driver being held up and did not bother to stop or call police. Other examples of such incidents in which bystanders do not lift a finger to help people in trouble are reported in the news.

A basic tenet of all major religions is to "do unto others as you would have others do unto you." In philosophy, students learn the "categorical imperative" – behave as if your action must become a general rule.

If you are on a vacation trip and your car breaks down, you stop a passing motorist and ask him to take you to the next town, or to send a mechanic back to help you. If passing motorists ignore your waving hand and do not stop, even though you are standing beside your car with the hood up (and are obviously not a hitch-hiker but a driver with a stalled car) you feel frustrated and angry – and helpless. You ask yourself, how can people be so callous and indifferent?

This is the crux of the matter: we must help young people to learn not to be callous and indifferent . . . *by enabling them to understand the feelings of the individual who needs help . . . and to realize that we all, at one time or another and in one way or another, need an act of kindness from another person.*

Concern for others is not a matter limited to assisting unfortunates set upon by hoodlums. Concern for others has far wider application. Morality, ethics, citizenship, the human outlook – all imply a concern for others that is a general and pervasive attitude of kinship with people that surmounts narrow bounds. An intelligent awareness and sympathy for the needs of others involves such broad concerns as sensitivity to the need for full medical care of the aged poor, for richer "horizons" of experience for slum children, for integration of schools, for job opportunities for youthful dropouts. And so on.

Busybody or good Samaritan?

The problem:

The story, *A Long Nose Has a Short Life* is focused on the problem of involvement. In this story, two boys are accused of cheating in a history test. One is guilty, the other innocent. A third boy can clear the innocent person and expose the guilty one. But if he does, he will be scorned as a "squealer" – a tattle-tale – by the other boys in school, and will have to take a licking from the cheater. He can escape both the beating and the stigma by simply remaining silent. Nobody knows he can expose the guilty cheater; and even if they did, none of his friends would blame him for not wanting to be a Judas who rats on another boy. Only the innocent person, being punished for something he did not do, would blame him – if he knew.

In this story, the issues are confronted and defined, and alternatives of behavior delineated. The fact that when a bystander does interfere, some risk is involved, is not glossed over; the risk, sometimes, is very real; nevertheless, the responsibility of the on-looker exists.

A LONG NOSE HAS A SHORT LIFE *

That morning when Barney Craig walked into the principal's outer office, he found Pete Haines and Raoul Marchant waiting there. Raoul nodded politely; Pete gave Barney a hard stare, which was all Pete ever gave anybody, unless it was an addition of lumps. Barney sat down, across from the other two.

Waiting, Barney got the feeling the two boys were worried. Raoul sat stiff and straight, but his hands kept twisting together. Raoul was new here; he was French, and his use of English was something very interesting but puzzling. In France, Barney had read, school was very strict; probably Raoul was in trouble and didn't know what to expect from Mr. Davis and feared the worst. Pete Haines was chewing gum, even here in the principal's office. Pete was big for his age, hard-muscled, and hard-headed. It wasn't just that he was a bully that made Barney leery of him, but the fact that Pete seemed to enjoy it. As far as Barney was concerned, if Pete had become extinct with the dinosaurs and sabre-toothed tiger, Barney would have been happy.

Mr. Davis opened his door.

"Come in, you two."

Pete and Raoul rose and walked into the other office. Barney sighed and settled down to wait. He was in charge of traffic patrol, and wanted to suggest some changes to Mr. Davis.

Barney did not intend to eavesdrop, but the partition wall was thin and Mr. Davis' words were distinct, especially when Barney – his attention caught – leaned his ear against the wood.

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"Boys," Mr. Davis was saying to Pete and Raoul, "Miss Duncan has brought me your history test papers. She is puzzled by them. So am I. Perhaps you can explain them to me?"

Raoul said, "Sir, I do not understand. Something is wrong?"

"Yes, Raoul. This test was a review of American history reading covered by your class the past two months. For some of these multiple choice questions, you were required to complete the dates. You've made certain mistakes."

"I am sorry."

"Pete, the answers you gave to some questions also are wrong."

"Can't win 'em all," Pete said.

"Pete, you and Raoul sit next to each other, don't you?"

"I guess so. Miss Duncan put me there."

Raoul asked again, "Something is wrong, sir?"

"Something, Raoul, is very – puzzling, let's say. You've made certain errors in answering the test questions. Pete, you've made the same errors. In fact, *exactly* the same errors."

"Oh, now, Mr. Davis," Pete protested; and Raoul said, "I do something not right, sir?"

Mr. Davis let out a long sigh; and Barney, overhearing through the partition, snorted to himself. *He* knew what happened! Trust good old Pete Meathead Haines to be up to his usual tricks. When the muscle was passed out, Pete was out there with a washtub; but when the brains were being apportioned, Pete was standing there with an eyedropper.

"Boys," Mr. Davis said, "look at the questions on your papers. I've marked several – read them. *The Civil War was started when Fort Sumter was fired upon. What was the date?* Your answer, Pete, is April 12, 1867. And your answer, Raoul, is April 12, 1867. The right answer is April 12, 1861.

"Another question: *Name two presidents who were assassinated over a half-century ago.* Pete, you wrote: President Garfield, 1887, and President McKinley, 1907. Raoul, you wrote the same. But the right answer is Garfield, 1881, and McKinley, 1901.

"Another question: *When was the attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor?* Your answer, Pete, is December 7, 1947. Yours, Raoul, Dec. 7, 1947. The right answer, of course, is December 7, 1941. Tell me, Pete – how did you happen to make such mistakes?"

"It beats me, Mr. Davis. I just don't know."

"Raoul, don't you think it odd that the two of you made exactly the same mistakes?"

"Sir, I – do not understand. I *know* correct date of Pearl Harbor attack. 1941 it happen."

"You wrote 1947 right here on your paper, Raoul. Can you explain your mistake?"

"N-no, sir."

"Boys, I repeat: you made the same mistakes. I don't believe it was just an accident. Pete, I want the truth from you – and nothing but the truth. Did you

copy from Raoul's paper?"

"Me, sir? Oh, no, sir! That would be cheating! I study hard. I don't need to copy from nobody!"

"Raoul, did you copy from Pete's paper?"

"No, sir."

"During the test, Raoul, did you notice Pete trying to get a look at your paper?"

"No, sir."

"Pete, did Raoul look at *your* paper?"

"Well, sir, you know how it is – I mean, for all I know – Well, I was too busy writing to watch."

"Then neither of you have any explanation as to why your papers have mistakes that are exactly alike?"

Barney, listening in the outer office, jumped to his feet in a sudden excited rush of understanding. *He* knew what had happened! *He* knew that one boy had copied from the other, and he knew *which* boy had copied!

Pete had copied from Raoul.

What was more, Raoul had answered those questions *correctly* – but Pete, copying them, had copied them *incorrectly*.

And what's more, Barney told himself excitedly, *I can prove it! Raoul is a good student, and he's honest; but Pete's a lazy dimwit and he's dishonest, and I can prove it!*

Those dates – 1861, 1881 and 1901, and 1941 – they were incorrectly written on Pete's paper as 1867, 1887, 1907 and 1947, because Pete had mistaken Raoul's figure *one* as a figure *seven*. . . . Barney's family had had a French student as a visitor; many French people wrote the figure *one* with a line slanting down from the top to the left. So it looked like our figure seven. The actual French seven had a crossbar in the middle, so that it looked like an F.

Barney then heard Mr. Davis say, "I'm marking both these papers F. Raoul, starting school in a new country and a different language is hard, I know. But cheating is not an answer to your problem. You will get a reputation that will be difficult to change."

He's accusing Raoul, Barney realized – and impulsively moved to the door, telling himself: *All I got to do is go in there and tell Raoul to show Mr. Davis how he writes the figure one. That'll prove he's honest and Pete's the cheater!*

Barney grasped the door knob – and stopped.

He would be getting himself into all kinds of trouble if he did this.

He was running tattling to teacher, that's what he was doing. Pete would blab to everybody, Barney foresaw. The gang would call him a rat fink squealer. And what would Pete Haines *do* to him? Just beat his ears off, that's all. Pete was the biggest roughneck in school. *It wouldn't be just one working-over he'd give me,* Barney foresaw. *Every day, going home after school, I have to pass the corner where Pete and his gang hang out. Every day, I'd have to run a gauntlet,* Barney realized. Every day, they'd jeer at him; they'd gang up on him. . . .

But I'm not supposed to know anything about this, anyway! I'm eavesdropping, and Mr. Davis wouldn't like that. Besides, if I bust in there now, I'd be squealing. Carrying tales to teacher. Sticking my nose into other people's business . . . a good way to get it cut right off. . . .

The response of two groups of 9th-grade students to this dilemma is significant. They sympathised with the innocent boy. They felt contempt for the bully who cheated and was willing to let the innocent boy take the blame.

But they refused to become involved.

Asked what they thought the bystander should do – Should he clear the innocent boy by exposing the other boy's guilt? – they said no.

They refused to intervene.

They were willing to let the guilty go unpunished and the innocent boy be victimized.

They would not tattle. They would not "squeal." They would not expose an age-mate to the punishing adult. The code of the peer group was too strong for their sense of justice. They would not play the role of the informer, for that is how they saw the demand upon the onlooker. The result, therefore, was that they would remain uninvolved. They would stand by, see injustice done, and not help the innocent victim.

The challenge is clear. The peer group must be helped to explore such dilemmas and confront the consequences of non-involvement.

Part VI

SPECIAL USES OF ROLE-PLAYING

The following account shows how role-playing can be used to relieve a disturbing situation in a classroom, to bring help to an individual child, and to aid a whole class to grow in tolerance and understanding.

Mrs. Nichols, who taught 1st and 2nd grade in a suburban school, had 9-year-old Marilyn in her group. The girl should have been in the 4th grade, but had been put here in a combined 1st and 2nd grade because she couldn't do 4th-grade work – and because the principal believed that Mrs. Nichols had the patience and warmth of personality to cope with Marilyn.*

Marilyn — a physically handicapped child

On the playground, Marilyn was always a focus of trouble. She was the butt of playground mischief. Inside the classroom, she was still a center of furor: a disruptive clown, who would go through all kinds of antic movements with her hands and face and body, cavorting and mugging for laughs. She couldn't concentrate on work, and she kept other children from doing so by annoying and distracting them until they lashed out at her in irritation.

Marilyn was deaf.

And the only talk of which she was capable was gibberish.

She had been almost totally deaf from birth and had never learned to talk so that she could be understood.

She was not a drab, apathetic child but a bright and lively youngster acrackle with energy, keenly alive to sensation and impulse. The trouble was, of course, that her energy and curiosity had no constructive outlet. Frustrated, it found expression in mischief. She acted the fool. She stole things. Inside the classroom or out on the playground, she was always embroiled in excitement: either upsetting other children or being the butt of teasing that drove her almost into screaming hysterics.

Mrs. Nichols could have asked that Marilyn be removed from the class. But she knew that if this were done, Marilyn would be permanently excluded from school, for she had a record of trouble-making. In the school which she had previously attended, she had repeatedly rebelled by running away. Several times she had not been found until help from the police had been enlisted. Here,

*The teacher in this true account of creative work is Mrs. Hildred Nichols of the Montebello Public Schools, Montebello, California.

with her, Mrs. Nichols realized, was Marilyn's last chance for an education. Her parents, with five other children to support, were too poor to provide special schooling for Marilyn.

Mrs. Nichols decided that she would *have* to help Marilyn become a cooperative member of the class.

But how? . . .

First of all, Mrs. Nichols got the P.T.A. to buy Marilyn a hearing aid. For the first time in her life, then, Marilyn could really hear.

Next, Mrs. Nichols asked for help from consultants in the office of the County Superintendent. It was arranged for Marilyn to have some special tutoring in speech and reading at home.

Marilyn's problem, however, was not merely to become able to learn, but to become accepted by her contemporaries and to become a functioning and cooperating member of the class.

Mrs. Nichols decided to use role-playing to help her with this problem. She then discovered that the materials she needed did not exist at 1st- and 2nd-grade level.

So Mrs. Nichols created them.

She wrote a series of two-minute stories on the general theme of *How it feels to be different*. She selected the kinds of happenings which intensely arouse the feelings of children, the kinds of pressures which make them behave explosively and unacceptably. And this series of stories – over a period of several months – she read aloud to the youngsters seated on the floor in a circle before her.

The first story, *Play Ball*, told about a crippled boy who could not run. He did take part in the ball games, however, for his classmates ran for him. They liked him, and they respected him: he was very skillful at making model planes.

Another story she wrote for her circle of rapt listeners was *A Big Boy Like You*, about a child who was so shy and got so fussed when grown-ups questioned him that he couldn't answer. And she read to her class the story *There's No Room*, telling how a child felt when he wasn't wanted, as Marilyn so often had felt. Mrs. Nichols read *The Lost Ring*, about a girl who sometimes stole things – though she didn't really intend to: the act was unpremeditated, and afterwards she was just sick over having committed it.

"Have you ever felt badly about not getting something you wanted very much?" Mrs. Nichols asked her youngsters before reading *What Did You Get?* The story was about a boy whose family gave no presents one Christmas because of lack of money. Meeting his friends, the boy lied about what wonderful gifts he'd received. "Why do you suppose Johnny did that?" Mrs. Nichols asked the class.

Usually, after reading a story, all she had to do was ask a question to release a flood of reactions.

Discussion would be excited and eager as the children told details from their own experiences or from those of friends. Mrs. Nichols achieved several goals simultaneously: as the weeks passed, she made the point – established and

reinforced it, driving it home – that people may suffer not only from handicaps like a crippled leg which prevents running, but from other types of handicaps, too, like shyness, or not being wanted, or not having money. Moreover, she was guiding the children into sharing experiences and feelings and ideas. Not only through discussion, but through role-playing.

Often she had the youngsters dramatize one of the stories, and act out roles in it, spontaneously, without structuring or rehearsing, just improvising as they went along.

They stepped into the story characters' shoes. They stepped into Marilyn's shoes. They "identified" with Marilyn, gradually and increasingly. They learned how much she wanted to be liked. They didn't know the words, but they grew aware of the frustration, the feelings of rejection and shame, which so often Marilyn had felt.

They made growth. Learning how Marilyn felt, they began to sympathize with her. It was only natural, then, that they began to ease up on her. They stopped teasing and prodding her into screaming outbursts. Instead, they began to accept her. They started including her in games. She was chosen on teams.

The result was, finally, that she – belonged.

All the careful work Mrs. Nichols had done paid off! . . .

She had her class plan a culminating program for the end of the year, to which they invited the principal.

They showed him the things they had made in a construction unit. The pupils ran the whole show themselves. First- and 2nd-graders! One would begin, would tell what he had made, how he had built it, and what tools he had used. Finished, he would call on another child to rise and perform.

And Marilyn took her turn with all the others.

Marilyn – the nine-year-old who hadn't been able to hear at the beginning of the school term; who had been the disruptive element in the classroom, the child who had to vent the frustrated life within her in making trouble, the pathetic one who had run away when her helplessness got too intense for bearing – Marilyn rose when called upon, and took a turn like all the rest in explaining her project. She didn't mumble it, didn't do a fragmentary job, but gave a clear and logical presentation which the principal could easily understand. Marilyn could communicate now. Marilyn could talk intelligibly. She could hear questions put to her, and she could give sensible answers. When her turn was over, she called upon the next child and sat down. Just like anybody else.

Marilyn was no longer painfully "different."

An interesting footnote to Marilyn's story is worth adding: At the end of the year, Mrs. Nichols told the children that all had passed, and all were being promoted. "Me too?" Marilyn demanded. "Yes," Mrs. Nichols assured her. And Marilyn wailed, "But I don't *want* to leave the first grade!"

Not only did Marilyn profit by this venture in teaching for better human relations, but the whole class was helped to grow in insight and sympathy. The effort Mrs. Nichols had made, to mould attitudes and values, *did* carry out of the classroom and onto the playground and into neighborhood and home.

Role-playing with mentally retarded children

In the course of a research project in Special Education, it was decided to try role-playing with a group of mentally retarded 9th-graders. The teachers concerned were devoted and conscientious, and eager for any help which held promise for their students. They were, however, frankly dubious about role-playing. They doubted that it was practical with their slow learners. They believed that any presentation which called for more than six or eight minutes of concentration on the part of their students would not work. The consultant said "let's try it," saying that she believed, out of her experience with the problem-story procedure, that even mentally retarded pupils would be able to participate for considerable periods.

The consultant came to one of the special classes, in a big city junior high school. The teacher was a skilled, sensitive person who had encouraged his students to develop spontaneity through use of a home-made puppet theatre.

He introduced the consultant by saying that, since they had so much fun making up stories for their puppets, he thought that they'd like to hear another kind of story which Mrs. Jones had been using with other boys and girls.

The consultant set the stage for *Clubhouse Boat*. This problem-story had not been tailored to meet the specific needs of mentally retarded students in junior high schools but was written for 5th- and 6th-grade average students.

Nevertheless, these members of the special class gave the consultant their full attention as she read the story. It took twenty minutes to tell, with some dramatics and elaboration of detail. No pupil became overtly restless. Many of the young people expressed their feelings, during the presentation, in whispers and quiet comments.

When the consultant stopped, and asked, "What do you think Tommy will do?" there was a long moment of silence. Then the students began to talk.

These mentally retarded youngsters had ideas. With a little encouragement, several students got up and role-played a solution to the dilemma. Even a brain-injured girl who, the consultant had been warned beforehand, was often irrelevant in her comments, made pertinent remarks.

The class not only offered as many real solutions as "normal" classroom groups, but added considerations the consultant had never before been given. Further discussion revealed that these mentally retarded youngsters understood the story dilemma very well – *because they had held jobs and had actual experience of similar conflicts themselves.*

The adults present who were observing, and who knew these young people well, were surprised and delighted at the amount of participation in both role-playing and discussion which this session brought forth.

Moreover, instead of showing an attention span of just six or eight minutes, this retarded group participated in the role-playing for almost fifty minutes. This tended to confirm the belief among the adults that mentally retarded youngsters have abilities which have not been tapped for lack of media which release their powers.

When the period ended, several students came to the consultant and told her, "That was a good story!" and they asked her to come back after lunch because they wanted to put on a puppet show for her.

At one o'clock she came back to the classroom. At the suggestion of their teacher, the group put on a puppet version of *Clubhouse Boat*. And it was good! They recalled every significant element of the problem-story. In fact, they even inserted a scene which had been merely implied in the original. Their production was complete, the dialogue natural, and they acted out a sensible solution. And these were retarded youngsters!

When given material that touched upon the problems that were real for them in terms of the life situations they knew, they demonstrated a level of practical judgment that was considerably above the ability which the school had been able to elicit from them before. Role-playing, when structured through the problem-story, enabled them to perform in terms of the daily life experience they knew, and they had the exhilaration of success rather than the frustration encountered so often when dealing with academic materials.

Part VII

CHILDREN WRITE THEIR OWN PROBLEM-STORIES

A teacher who works with role-playing for some time finds that she has released unexpected potentialities in her pupils.

For example, it was suggested to the members of two classes who had considerable experience with role-playing that they might like to write their own problem-stories.

The results were very satisfying. Pupils produced stories which were informative about the young people themselves, and therefore of help to the teachers in understanding their students. Some of the stories were used for role-playing. The two classes were so pleased with the results that they planned to do more writing.*

Two of these stories are reproduced below, with a record of how one class role-played one of the narratives.

ROCK-HAPPY JUDY

I was out in the backyard, playing with my friend Jack . . . When my sister came up and hit me with a rock, and she ran around the house. Mother called Judy into the house and asked her if she hit me with a rock, and she said she didn't. There was a big argument between Judy and me. She said that somebody else must have thrown the rock from behind me. I didn't believe a word Judy said because it was all a lie. Of course just because Judy is a girl, I guess mother took her word, and told me to go outside and play and forget it. So I went outside and began to play, when up came my sister again and hit me. Then my friend and I went into the house together and told my mother. Mother called Judy in again and we had a nice little argument and mother still wouldn't believe us. Now you try to solve this case for us.

WORK AT HOME

My name is Jim and I want to tell you a story of my life.

My house has six living in it. They are my mother, father, brother, sister and brother-in-law. The reason my brother-in-law is living with us is because they are fixing their house.

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*Guided and supervised by Barbara Celse, Supervisor, Orange County Schools, Calif.

I want to write this story because I don't think it's fair. Every night after six people have dinner at the house, they go to the other part of the house. My mother says, "Do the dishes son." I am the only living thing in the kitchen. I have to do the dishes and they go watch TV.

The class role-played this story. Jim, who wrote this problem, did not participate in the first enactment. However, he helped arrange the seating at the dinner table.

A.

Family around the table.

(The adults did most of the talking. They tried to find someone else to do the dishes.)

Mother: "Well, I think Jean (older brother, aged 19) should stop gadding around every night with his girl friend. He should help, too. Now, Jean, you just stay home tonight and do the dishes. It won't hurt you."

Jean: "I got a date. Why doesn't Pat (married sister) help?"

(They suggested everyone in the family at one time or another. They also proposed:

That everyone take turns.

That a dishwasher be bought – but this was immediately vetoed because of cost.)

At this point, the class questioned Jim to get more information about the family. It was discovered that:

- Sister just had a baby.
- Jean (the older brother) works all day and sometimes helps build a house at night. He's engaged.
- Father and brother-in-law work on the house they are building at night.
- Jim gets paid for doing the dishes.

B.

Family around the table.

(In this second enactment Jim plays his own role.)

Father: Well, I think the women should wash the dishes.

Jim: (to brother) Why don't you help out?

Jean: I'm too busy.

Jim: But I want to see my TV program. I think he should help.

Jean: You need the money more than I do.

Brother-in-Law: I don't think Jim should have to do it all. Let's do them before we go to the house.

Father: Well, you know, you aren't going to be living with us much longer. Your house is almost finished. It will be different then.

Then the class again began to question the family members.

To JEAN:

Question: Why don't you bring your girl friend over and both of you help?

Answer: We'll be all dressed up!

Question: Well, she can wear an apron. I do.

Answer: Gosh, I work all day. I have to have some time for fun. Besides, I help on the house some nights, too.

To MOTHER:

Question: Why don't you help?

Answer: I work all day, too. Jim gets paid for this job.

To JIM:

Question: How long does it take you to do the dishes?

Answer: Last night it took me about two hours!

Question: You don't know how to do them! I –

The discussion then became a sharing of experiences in dish-washing, and rules for efficiency in doing the job.

The final consensus of the class's thinking was:

- Jim should have help sometimes.
- He needs to be more efficient.
- He could arrange his time better.
- Everybody has some job to do.
- And, furthermore, Jim gets *paid* to wash those dishes!

Part VIII

ROLE-PLAYING FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Pantomime, dramatic play, and role-playing

Role-playing is a spontaneity technique. It is a structured extension of dramatic play.

Play is a major part of the way infants and young children explore their world. The young child tests his ideas about reality by playing them out, by testing them in action.

Teachers of young children use pantomime and dramatic play in both open and structured ways. They provide play areas planned to suggest play patterns of children. Household furniture, dishes, dolls and like materials may suggest home activities; blocks, miniature adult dolls, toy trucks, boats, trains and planes encourage children to discover the movement of people and things, and to construct buildings, roads and bridges in imitation of life around them. Props of this kind are used freely by the children to organize and express their feelings and experiences. Although we describe this activity as "open," it is, in a very real sense, structured by the presence of the toys, dress-up clothes, dolls and similar materials placed in the play area by the teacher.*

This play becomes even more structured when:

a) The teacher places specific items in a setting: for example, an airplane panel and pilot's gear; a steering wheel and boat equipment; etc.

b) The teacher observes the children's play and notes play situations that can be clarified and expanded in meaning. For example, cars and trucks on the road have frequent collisions in the children's play. Obviously this presents an opportunity for the group to explore traffic problems and their control, and to introduce ideas of safety and regulation.

c) The teacher invites the children to demonstrate incidents from their play, or, if they are too shy, describes their activities to them in expanded language.

d) And finally, the teacher extends the children's knowledge of boats, planes, spaceships (or whatever the items of play are) through a follow-up with pictures, a story, perhaps a field trip – whatever media are appropriate.

In these ways the teacher of the young sets the stage, permits the children to use the setting *in their own way,* and then extends their perceptions and knowledge by feeding in follow-up experiences.

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*Fannie and George Shaftel, *Words and Action: Role-Playing Photo-Problems for Young Children,* Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1967, p. 4.

In *role-playing,* dramatic play is used as a means to explore a *focused* (structured) situation.

Teachers have been successful in doing role-playing with young children when they use a combination of *pantomime* (dramatic play without words) and *soliloquy* (The teacher thinks out loud about the problem situation; *i.e.,* "I am a little girl. I am mad. My big sister won't take me with her." This provides a model for language and action.) and *role-playing* (focused, verbal, dramatic play).

In some instances, teachers have structured their own brief (two-minute-long) story situations for use in their classrooms.*

Role-playing photo-problems

Another successful technique is the use of problem pictures as the stimulus to role playing.**

Essentially, the method of using problem pictures consists of two major steps:

a) Showing the photograph, and asking the children:
   "What is happening here?"
b) After discussion followed by initial role-playing, asking:
   "What do you think will happen next?"

In the brief initial discussion, the children begin to describe the picture so as to get an understanding of the problem involved.

Then, under teacher guidance, they may pantomime, then *act out* the incident with spoken words to get the feel of being actually in such a situation. If children cannot respond, at first, the teacher may take a leading role and involve children in responding to her.

Then, having sensed and somewhat defined the problem and grasped its emotional effect on the individuals involved, the children go on to a way or ways to solve the difficulty.

First, the group discusses some ways to solve the problem.

Then, they act out one or several solutions to the problem. After each enactment, through discussion, they explore what has happened, how the people feel, sometimes what will happen next.*

The following is an example of the use of a problem picture from *Words and Action.*

(The photograph shows a playground, boys crowded on a slide, waiting impatiently for a chance to slide down – because a very small boy is stalled halfway down the slide and a boy bigger than all the others is at the bottom, climbing up.)

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*H. Nichols and L. Williams, *Learning About Role-Playing,* Association for Childhood Education International, 1960.

**Fannie and George Shaftel, *Words and Action: Role-Playing Photo-Problems for Young Children.* Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1967, p. 31.

YOU CAN'T SLIDE UP

Plan of Procedure

Setting the stage

The subject of this photograph, depending upon the way it is interpreted, shows a younger child either being frustrated or helped by a bigger, older child who is blocking the bottom of the slide. It can motivate role-playing and discussion about the relationships between older and younger children. But, on another level, it can be used as orientation in playground rules for the "first year in school" groups. Children often unwittingly, or to show off, or on a dare, use play equipment improperly. Sometimes, to tease or bully smaller children, a mischief-maker will push a child too high on a swing or too fast on a merry-go-round, unaware of the real danger of his actions.

When the children are comfortably seated in a semicircle in front of you, start them talking about playground experiences: what they enjoy the most at the playground; when they go to the playground; some of the games they play. When the scene is established, ask,

TEACHER: When you go to the playground, are older children there, too? What do the older children do?

Possible responses

CHILDREN: They play ball – Sometimes they go on the swings – Sometimes they push kids on the swings – Sometimes they tease – Yeah, some boys are mean.

Calling on the children's own experience to focus interest

For the purpose of this problem situation, an adverse comment is useful, and can be followed up by asking,

TEACHER: How do they tease? How are they mean?

CHILDREN: Big kids take our ball – They run into the jump rope – They tell where we hide.

If no child in class mentions that older children sometimes are mean, or tease, ask a leading question such as,

TEACHER: Are the older boys and girls always nice and helpful to you younger children?

You will most likely get a few negative responses.

What is happening here?

Show your group the photograph and ask,

TEACHER: What is happening in this picture?

Allow time for their responses. If none are forthcoming, you might ask,

Focusing perception

TEACHER: Where are the children? What are they doing?

Possible responses

CHILDREN: They are at the slide – Everybody is waiting to go down – They can't – That big boy down there won't let them – He is one of those mean boys – He don't wait his turn.

If the children do not respond, continue by asking,

TEACHER: What is the big boy doing?

Possible responses

CHILDREN: He is climbing up – He shouldn't – It ain't allowed.

Modeling a role to encourage participation

TEACHER: I will be the little boy. I am sitting at the top of the slide. *(taking on the role)* I want my turn. It's my turn now! That big boy won't let me slide. Hey! Get out of the way. It's my turn. Get down and go to the end of the line. *(Turn to the children, stepping out of the role you have been playing.)* What will the big boy say?

End of enactment

CHILD: He says, "You just make me. I'm coming up."

Inviting a child to take the role

TEACHER: All right, you come here and say it to me. I am the boy at the top of the slide. *(You might sit on a table pretending it is the slide.)* Hey! Get out of the way. It's my turn. Go to the end of the line.

CHILD: Yah! Yah! You just make me! I'm coming up.

TEACHER: *(turning to the group):* What does the little boy do now?

Possible responses

CHILDREN: Find the teacher and tell her – Go ahead and slide down anyway.

Inviting feeling responses

TEACHER: How do you think the little boy feels? How about the other children who are waiting for their turn? What do you think they are saying?

Possible responses

CHILDREN: They are mad, too – They are saying, "Get off the slide" – They tell him, "Wait for a turn" – They yell, "Get off, get off!"

Of course, whenever you find the children wanting to take over, let them do so. It may not be necessary to give children the amount of guidance outlined in this *plan*. They may see the situation in its full implications at once, and respond strongly.

What will happen next?

TEACHER: What do you think will happen now?

Possible responses

CHILDREN: The little boy, he will slide down – Maybe they both is going to fall off – Somebody call a teacher – She is going to make the big boy go away – Maybe the little kids will hit the big boy – He is too big – They are afraid – Johnny's big brother can lick him – Yeah, Johnny, call your brother!

TEACHER: Show me what will happen.

Select a child to be the small boy at the top of the slide. Select another child to play the role of the boy at the bottom. Do not choose a big boy and so perhaps make him a target for blame or abuse. Other children can be waiting for their turns on the other side of the table.

TEACHER: There, you can show me what will happen.

An enactment

LITTLE BOY: Hey, get out of my way!

BIG BOY: I'm coming up. Don't you slide down.

CHILDREN: Go away – You aren't letting us play – Go on, Johnny – Slide down and hit him – Dora, go get your big sister – She'll chase him – I'm going to get the playground teacher – Yeah, Mrs. Bailey will fix him.

Casting another role

TEACHER: Let's stop a minute. Who would like to be the teacher? All right, Edna, you can be Mrs. Bailey. You are standing by the swings. Alice, run over and call Mrs. Bailey.

Continuing the enactment

CHILD: Mrs. Bailey, Mrs. Bailey! That big boy won't leave us alone.

Possible dialogue

MRS. BAILEY: You, Andy, get off that slide. *(Child moves around to the front of the table.)* Leave the kids alone. Go play with the big boys.

The children may have difficulty moving into this more advanced role-playing – if you do not have a volunteer for Mrs. Bailey's role, play the part yourself.

TEACHER: I'll be Mrs. Bailey. Edna, you ask me to help you. I am standing by the swings.

CHILD: Mrs. Bailey, Mrs. Bailey! We can't play on the slide. That big boy won't let us.

TEACHER: *(as Mrs. Bailey):* Let's go talk to him. Andy, it's against the rules to climb up a slide. Come down now. Why don't you go over to the ball field? The boys need a good pitcher. All right, Johnny, you can slide down now.

If some of the children during the initial discussion period suggested that the big boy was trying to help the small child, not tease or bully him, or even if they did not themselves suggest this idea, it might be worth bringing up at this time. You might say,

Suggesting another meaning for the picture.

TEACHER: We have seen what happens when someone butts in and spoils the fun on the slide – but let's take another look at this picture. It could have another meaning, couldn't it? Maybe the big boy wasn't butting in. He might have been trying to help.

Hold the picture up and let the children study it again.

Possible responses.

CHILDREN: He could be helping – He is going to help – He is the brother – He says, "Johnny, you wait. I will slide in front. You can hold on to me. We can go real slow." – Yeah, he says, "Don't be scared."

TEACHER: Fine, let's try it. Who wants to be the big boy, Johnny's brother?

It may prove valuable to extend the meanings of this experience: older children sometimes help younger children.

TEACHER: When you are in trouble, or need help, do you get help from a big brother or sister?

Hopefully, the children will respond. Let them discuss such experiences fully. Sum it up for them by saying,

TEACHER: Sometimes older boys or girls do tease, but sometimes they help you, too.

Part IX

IN SUMMARY

Teachers themselves should practice role-playing

Human beings are complex. Problems of human relations are woven of many threads. To deal with such problems, the more knowledge and experience one has the better.

The goal of role-playing is growth in character development and insight into human experience. A teacher needs much insight to guide such growth. She needs all the tools which the profession can pass on to her. She needs tact, and the wisdom to know that failures must always occur – and often are only apparent, not real – and that small successes will, in the long run, add up to real achievement.

Basic to effective role-playing is rapport between teacher and learners.

The permissive classroom tone required for sociodrama must be real, not counterfeit. It follows, then, that the adult who is most liked and trusted by her classroom group will have the most success with dramatic improvisation.

No teacher or group leader should expect to do role-playing without experience and be immediately successful, or to avoid all mistakes in handling her group. Guiding role-playing may always be difficult for some teachers, and conversely, role-playing may come naturally to others, especially those who are warm, sympathetic and experienced in such classroom techniques as dramatic play and drama production.

Even for the latter, real success in role-playing is likely only after training. Actual participation in sociodrama by the teacher herself is especially helpful.

She should develop a keen sensitivity to the feelings of her students. She should become aware of the emotional health aspects of the procedure so that her handling of her pupils is always purposefully directed toward better human relations. Such experiences as attending a workshop in which role-playing is developed as a teaching technique, or exploring role-playing in in-service education meetings are good preparation for the classroom teacher.* It is also wise for her, when starting role-playing with her pupils, to request the aid of a consultant. These may be available through the school system, the county school office, university extension or intergroup agencies.

*Increasing numbers of colleges and universities are offering summer workshops in intergroup education and human relations. Many of these are offered in cooperation with the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Information about such workshops may be secured by writing to the nearest regional office of the National Conference, or to the national office.

A look ahead

As educators become more concerned with the emotional life of the child, a number of questions present themselves for serious consideration.

Should the teacher, relatively untrained in the field of psychology, be guiding children in the exploration of materials which may be deeply disturbing? It is sometimes argued that the teacher is not a clinical psychologist or therapist and may do more damage by her efforts than good. The fact remains, however, that whether teachers plan to stimulate children to examine critical life situations or not, such situations are frequently projected into the life of the classroom. For example, it is not uncommon to visit schools and find that teachers are tracking down some stolen article. In a teachers' workshop on human relations in the classroom, when such an incident is role-played, some very well-intentioned teachers concentrate their entire efforts on "trapping" the suspect. Surely such teachers need help in developing a point of view about child behavior and in learning some non-threatening techniques for helping children explore their own feelings and motivations, and society's attitude toward behavior generally considered unacceptable.

All too often, teachers lecture children about undesirable behavior and actually deepen young people's anxieties about the ways they have used to solve their dilemmas. Here again teachers need aid in developing "permissive" procedures for exploring the social mistakes children inevitably make as they learn their way into a culture or subculture.

Many teachers are developing the psychological insight needed to help children in their developmental tasks. They are learning that (1) behavior is caused, (2) that it always occurs in a setting, and (3) that adults who wish to help children to grow into adequate individuals need to know the many strands and interrelationships in a child's situation. The opportunity to study the behavior of children under the guidance of child development experts is increasingly available to classroom teachers through the services of universities and colleges in school districts.

Success in the use of role-playing is greatly enhanced when the teacher becomes skillful in other classroom techniques. Knowledge of good discussion procedures, steps in problem-solving and non-directive counseling, all contribute to a skillful guidance of role-playing.

It has been the experience of the authors that when teachers use other forms of spontaneity expression in their program – such as dramatic play, creative drama and creative writing – children are much more free and responsive in problem-story situations.

Can the teacher develop a sensitivity to the responses of her children so that she will know when she has reached the limits of her guidance skills and needs to call in a therapist? Some psychologists fear that teachers may arouse children's buried disturbances, and fail to provide the follow-up of needed therapy. Guidance specialists have long insisted that the teacher is a counselor, not always by choice but by virtue of her role as an authority figure and an agent of the culture.

The extent of the teacher's counseling role depends upon her personality. As teachers learn more about child development they may gradually become skilled in recognizing signs of great need in their charges. If pre-service and in-service programs of teacher education provide the means, it is our conviction that teachers can come to know when they have reached the limits of their role and where to turn for expert help.

We assume that children can learn that they are not alone in their dilemmas by exploring problem-stories with which they can identify without feeling threatened. It is also our assumption that elementary and high school youngsters will best learn how to deal with their emotional problems under permissive teacher guidance and with the support and opposition of their age-mates. What the possibilities and limitations of this approach may be are still subject to extensive action research.

Meanwhile, it is our hope that the classroom teacher who uses human relations materials will increasingly become aware that all behavior is caused. That for every action, whether socially acceptable or not, there is a reason – and that it is the better part of wisdom to withhold judgment and to make a patient effort to understand the tangled and hidden roots that are always at the base of every act, however puzzling it may seem. To be patient, to make no snap judgments, to strive to understand. . . .

For, in this way, adults can hope most to influence the personalities of the young, to help them become democratic individuals.

> We cannot hope to create democracy, let alone defend democracy until we who are educators – that is, who are parents and teachers – know how to bring up children who behave democratically because that is the kind of person they are. We cannot conserve democratic values until we are clear and honest and intelligent about "how democracy gets into the personality."
>
> –from *Children In The World Today,* by Mary Shattuck Fisher.

Part X

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Part XI

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